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Pitcairn

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 8 December 2016. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

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The Territory at a glance

Territory: Pitcairn is a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Representative of administering Power: Governor: Jonathan Sinclair.

Geography: Pitcairn is located midway between New Zealand and the continent of South America at 25°S and 130°W. It comprises four islands: Pitcairn (the only inhabited island), Henderson, Ducie and Oeno.

Land area: 35.5 km^2 (Pitcairn Island: 4.35 km^2).

Exclusive economic zone (now a maritime protected area): 834,000 km^2.

Population: 39 (2016); this figure does not include the 12 individuals currently abroad.

Life expectancy at birth: Not available.

Languages: The official languages are English and Pitkern, a mixture of eighteenth-century English and Tahitian.

Capital: Adamstown, the only settlement.

Mayor: Shawn Christian

Main political parties: None.

Elections: Elections for the Island Council and Deputy Mayor are held every two years (most recent election: November 2015); elections for the Mayor, the head of the Council, are held every three years. The last Mayoral election was held on 9 November 2016.

Economy: The economy of Pitcairn is based largely on fishing, horticulture, the sale of stamps and handicrafts, beekeeping and honey production. Pitcairn receives budgetary aid from the United Kingdom.

Monetary unit: New Zealand dollar ($NZ).

Brief history: Pitcairn is named after Robert Pitcairn, a British midshipman who sighted it in 1767. The island was uninhabited when castaways from *HMS Bounty* (9 mutineers and 18 Polynesians) arrived there in 1790. Most of the inhabitants of Pitcairn today can trace their ancestry back to those mutineers.

I. Constitutional, legal and political issues

1. A new constitution came into effect in March 2010, replacing the Pitcairn Order 1970 and the Pitcairn Royal Instructions 1970. The Governor is appointed by the British Crown. In practice, the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to New Zealand is appointed concurrently as Governor of Pitcairn, and overall responsibility for the administration of the island is accordingly vested in this function.

2. Under the Constitution, the Governor may make laws for the peace, order and good government of Pitcairn after consultation with the Island Council. Laws enacted by the Governor are styled ordinances. All ordinances are subject to disallowance by the British monarch, on the advice of the Secretary of State. The Government of the United Kingdom retains the general power to legislate directly for Pitcairn by an Act of Parliament or an Order in Council.

3. Islanders manage their internal affairs through the Island Council, the existence of which is enshrined in the Constitution and the composition and functions of which are established by the Local Government Ordinance (Laws of Pitcairn 2015 Revised edition). The Ordinance confers upon the Council the duty, subject to orders and directions of the Governor, to provide for the enforcement of the laws of Pitcairn and empowers it to make regulations for the good administration of Pitcairn, the maintenance of peace, order and public safety and the social and economic advancement of the islanders. According to the 2015 revised edition of the Ordinance, the Council consists of seven voting members (the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and five Councillors, all elected) and three non-voting ex officio members (the Governor, the Deputy Governor and the Administrator (a role created in December 2014)). During elections held in November 2016, Shawn Christian was re-elected as Mayor.

A. Electoral qualifications

4. In order to vote for Island Officers, persons must be at least 18 years old, intend to remain on Pitcairn indefinitely and have been resident there for a specified period: one year if the person has a right of abode on Pitcairn or a spouse of someone otherwise entitled to vote; two years if a de facto marital partner of a person otherwise entitled to vote; or three years if normally resident on Pitcairn. Anyone who is eligible to vote may also stand for election to any of the island offices, so long as he or she has not been sentenced to imprisonment for three months or more in the past five years. The Island Secretary prepares the register of voters in September/October of each election year, and elections are held between the first and fifteenth days in November (inclusive).

B. Judicial system and human rights

5. The Island Magistrate is appointed by the Governor from among the residents of Pitcairn. Other magistrates, legally qualified in a Commonwealth country, are appointed to preside over the Magistrate's Court in matters beyond the powers of the Island Magistrate. The Magistrate's Court sits with two Assessors, except in

specified circumstances. The criminal jurisdiction of the Magistrate's Court is limited to offences triable summarily or either way, to committal proceedings and certain inquiries; and the magistrates have prescribed limits on their sentencing powers. The Magistrate's Court has jurisdiction in civil litigation up to a prescribed level. There is a right of appeal to the Supreme Court of Pitcairn, which is a superior court of record and has jurisdiction in criminal and civil cases beyond the competence of the Magistrate's Court. The Supreme Court is constituted by a judge sitting alone. The judges of the Supreme Court are the Chief Justice and up to four other judges. The Supreme Court may sit with assessors if it thinks it expedient or practical to do so. There are further rights of appeal to the Pitcairn Court of Appeal, which is comprised of a President, two or more Justices of Appeal and the Chief Justice, and to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

6. The Supreme Court has original jurisdiction over alleged breaches of the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution. It has power to make such declarations and orders as it considers appropriate for the purpose of upholding the rights, and may award damages. The Governor, as holder of the highest executive office, and the Chief Justice, as head of the judiciary, are responsible within their respective spheres of authority for overseeing the implementation of human rights on Pitcairn.

7. A child safety review conducted in 2015 highlighted the need for continued safeguarding measures on the island. In addition, 11 islanders graduated from the Child Protection Studies programme, a training course accredited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, between 2011 and 2013.

8. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, held in London on 1 and 2 November 2016, the United Kingdom and the overseas territories, including Pitcairn, agreed to work together to conduct a review of reservations to core United Nations human rights treaties ahead of the preparation of the report of the United Kingdom under the universal periodic review conducted by the Human Rights Council, to be submitted in 2017. They also committed themselves to working together to further develop the capacity of territories' national human rights institutions, where established, in line with international standards set out in the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles), and to deepening understanding of their shared obligations with regard to international human rights. In the same communiqué, it was noted that the leaders of the overseas territories had demonstrated their commitment to ensuring the highest standards of protection for children in the territories, including through the development of national response plans for safeguarding. In addition, the signing, including by the Government of Pitcairn, of a memorandum of understanding to promote more effective collaboration between the territories for the safeguarding of children was welcomed.

9. In the communiqué, the overseas territories and the United Kingdom reiterated their mutual determination to continue to tackle corruption, fraud, money laundering and financing of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and to further enhance transparency and law enforcement cooperation in the context of financial services. They also reiterated their shared commitment to providing the leadership necessary to meet the June 2017 deadline for the implementation of new arrangements

regarding the exchange of beneficial ownership information on companies incorporated in their jurisdiction and to continuing to provide the highest levels of law enforcement cooperation possible before that date.

II. Budget

10. According to the United Kingdom, the 2015-2016 expenditure for Pitcairn, supported by the Department for International Development, was some £2.9 million. According to the Department, the budgetary aid covers citizens' reasonable assistance needs, ensuring the maintenance of a range of basic public services (e.g., electricity and telecommunications) and the provision of part-time public sector employment. Financial aid is also used for medical and educational services, as well as a shipping service that provides a necessary lifeline in terms of freight and passenger services. The prospect of self-sufficiency is very low in the case of Pitcairn because of its size and remoteness. The island's financial aid has increased by some 220 per cent over the past eight years, owing mainly to the cost of the new shipping service introduced in 2008, the associated costs of the four expatriate professionals (police officer, family and community adviser, teacher and doctor) and exchange rate fluctuations. The major recurrent expenditures include shipping and freight subsidies and the costs of off-island professionals who are employed to ensure continued child safeguarding and other medical, police, teaching and social welfare matters. The territorial allocation provided for Pitcairn under the ninth European Development Fund, which ran from 2008 to 2013, amounted to €2.4 million. Under the tenth European Development Fund, which covers the period 2014-2020, Pitcairn will be granted an indicative amount of €2.4 million.

III. Economic and social conditions

11. The principal source of income for the public economy had traditionally been the sale of stamps. Owing largely to a downturn in the stamp market, however, the island now receives budgetary assistance from the Department for International Development. A scaled-down stamp trade continues nonetheless, with six or seven new stamp issues released each year. Pitcairn coins (New Zealand mint) are another collector's item. Revenue is also generated from landing fees for tourist arrivals.

12. The Territory's income is also supplemented by the sale of Internet domain names. Internet users worldwide can acquire a ".pn" suffix that is permanently awarded to Pitcairn for, according to the territorial Government, a fee of $100 annually or $10 per month. Also available for purchase are the subdomains ".co.pn", ".net.pn" and ".org.pn", which cost $ 50 per year.

13. The private economy of Pitcairn is based on the manufacture and sale of handicrafts, some of which are available directly through the Internet. Bartering, mainly with passing ships, is also an important part of the economy. The island's fertile soil produces a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. Some islanders also provide a homestay service to tourists. Pitcairn has no hotels or motels. The Pitcairn Island Producers' Cooperative, established in 1999, promotes and coordinates the distribution of honey and honey products. According to data from the

Commonwealth Secretariat, a range of minerals, including manganese, iron, copper, gold, silver and zinc, have been discovered within the maritime protected area of Pitcairn. Exploitation of these minerals is prohibited under the maritime protected area ordinance.

14. The Government of Pitcairn has developed a five-year strategic development plan, covering the period 2012-2016, reviewed in 2014 and now covering the period 2014-2018, which sets out the views and aspirations of the islanders for the socioeconomic development of Pitcairn. It is based largely on efforts to boost revenue by increasing tourism, small business development and honey production. It is a living document and is frequently updated.

15. Three main challenges to socioeconomic development have been identified by the Department for International Development: the legacy of the child sexual abuse cases and the continuing need to maintain rigorous child protection measures; the ageing population and the declining share of the population that is economically active; and the lack of migration to the island.

16. With regard to the first challenge, the administering Power has put in place interventions to create a substantial child safeguarding framework, and independent reviews took place in 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015. The reviews recommended continued Government of the United Kingdom leadership and responsibility for overseeing child safety on Pitcairn, continued appropriate vetting of any adults intending to move to Pitcairn, the integration of child safeguarding into all future development planning for Pitcairn, regular review of children's development and circumstances and the continued management and monitoring of known sex offenders. The reviews also explicitly recommended that off-island professionals continue to be employed to implement child safeguarding procedures and protocols, with oversight by the administering Power.

17. Regarding the second challenge, of the resident population of 39, there are only 28 in paid employment, with only 8 of this paid employment group under 50, of whom only 1 is in the 20-30 age group. There are currently 26 people on the island over 50, 10 of whom are over 65. By 2025, the age dependency ratio (those under 18 and over 65, compared with the productive population) is expected to be more than 100 per cent, compared with the current ratio of 58 per cent. The situation is having an increasingly negative impact on economic production and health-care costs. The natural growth rate of the population is already beyond a sustainable replacement rate. In the period 2001-2012, there were only eight births and fewer than five women of childbearing age. The Department for International Development notes that, considering that there are only three options for increasing the population — children being born to islanders, the return of some of the diaspora and/or immigration to the island — this will continue to be a consideration in socioeconomic development planning for the foreseeable future. The implications of an ageing population for future financial aid rounds are that increasing funds will be required in the medium term to assist the ageing population.

18. With respect to the third challenge, in the second half of 2013, a survey was launched to ascertain whether members of the diaspora had any interest in returning to the Territory and the factors conditioning a decision.

19. According to the final report of the survey, presented in January 2014 by a consultancy firm, the overall response rate was 28 per cent (33 of 120 households). The following three barriers to potential returns were identified: the legacy of the child sexual abuse cases, acceptance of outsiders and new ideas and accessibility. No significant interest among members of the diaspora in returning to or investing in Pitcairn was identified, with only three respondents signalling an interest in living on Pitcairn permanently.

20. It was found that the child sexual abuse cases had created a clear reluctance on the part of members of the diaspora to publicly identify themselves as being from Pitcairn and sullied the Territory's reputation. The view was that on-island social norms did not conform to acceptable international norms. Reference was made to multigenerational (long-standing) inappropriate social behaviour. The survey also identified negative perceptions around the ability to bring children to the Territory and concerns regarding child protection issues. The need for a community reconciliation process was also identified. According to the administering Power and as of November 2016, preparation for such a process was taking place.

21. It was noted that acceptance of outsiders was a complex matter. There was a strong belief that outsiders were not welcomed and would not be able to integrate. Acceptance of outsiders with regard to being eligible and selected for government employment or introducing and/or expanding businesses, governance issues and the need for better structures and qualified people were also flagged as areas of concern.

22. It was also noted that accessibility was repeatedly mentioned as a barrier to immigration, especially in relation to factors such as health (medical evacuations), education and general isolation, an aspect that, according to the administering Power, is being looked into (as of December 2015).

23. The repopulation plan, covering the period 2014-2019, prepared by the Island Council, was aimed at attracting and retaining migrants and, to ensure its success, addressing areas such as housing, education and health. This has now been superseded by a new repopulation strategy. Like its predecessor, this new strategy recognizes the paramount importance of encouraging new migrants to Pitcairn to settle or work. In line with the strategic development plan, in September 2015, the Island Council approved an immigration policy designed to further promote immigration and repopulation, bringing people with the skills and commitment necessary to Pitcairn. According to official information provided by the Island Council, as at 10 August 2016, there were 451 repopulation enquiries from 42 countries and two active settlement applications logged with the Island Office. On 14 September, the Deputy Mayor informed the Council that there were two active settlement applications with the Deputy Governor and another two registered applicants on file with the Island Office.

24. According to the Department for International Development, in designing the Pitcairn financial aid intervention it considered the likely effect on reducing gender inequality. The Department also manages the key gender issue on the Territory, which is the legacy of child abuse, ensuring that robust child safeguarding mechanisms are in place. The financial aid intervention also provides for services

equally for all islanders, with specific attention given to the needs of children and older persons, as well as support and care for those with mental health issues.

A. Transport

25. Access to Pitcairn is possible only by sea. Currently, a shipping service runs from Mangareva in French Polynesia to the island eight times a year, with four freight runs directly from New Zealand. Cruise ships also call during the tourism season, which lasts from December to March. Ships visiting the island remain at anchor some distance from the shoreline and visitors are ferried to the island in longboats. According to information provided by the Government of the United Kingdom, plans are being taken forward to improve landing facilities, in particular for cruise ship passengers, given that tourism development is important for the future prosperity of Pitcairn. According to the European Union, an alternative landing facility, supported by the European Development Fund, is being constructed and is nearly complete.

B. Communications and power supply

26. The communications system installed in 2006 provided the island with telephones in all homes, a satellite Internet system, one television channel and videoconferencing facilities. The system was upgraded in 2011. According to the administering Power, Internet communication is slow, lacks bandwidth and, at times, is unreliable. It is also very expensive to run. Currently, diesel-powered generators provide 240-volt electric power for 15 hours per day (7 a.m.-10 p.m.).

C. Land tenure

27. A land tenure reform ordinance was enacted at the end of 2006 to ensure that every islander was entitled to an allocation of house, garden, orchard and forestry land. According to the administering Power, this will be reviewed in the near future. More detailed information on land distribution issues is provided in the 2005 working paper (A/AC.109/2005/10).

D. Employment

28. There is a mixture of government employment and self-employment. Under the new governance structure, introduced in April 2009, most of the working-age inhabitants have at least one part-time government job. According to the administering Power, private enterprise is increasing and is encouraged by the Government of Pitcairn. There are no banks on the island, but cash may be drawn against credit cards and foreign currency may be exchanged at the Government Treasurer's office. In November 2015, the Island Council approved an employment policy and an employment guidance. The policy is intended to support the ability of the Government to meet its objectives within the strategic development plan and provides a solid platform for recruitment, performance management, disciplinary

procedures and dispute resolution within the Pitcairn public service. Also in November 2015, an occupational health and safety policy was approved by the Island Council. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all employees, contractors and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities to the Government and are committed to ensuring the health and well-being of employees, contractors, volunteers and the Pitcairn Island community.

E. Education

29. Education is free and compulsory for all children between 5 and 15 years of age. The only school was completely rebuilt in 2006. Instruction is in English and based on the New Zealand standard curriculum. The Education Officer is a qualified teacher recruited from New Zealand, usually for a one-year term. For practical reasons, most children attend post-primary education at schools in New Zealand. Overseas secondary education is encouraged through the granting of bursaries, and a number of pupils have received secondary education in New Zealand at the expense of the Government of Pitcairn. Since 2007, citizens from the overseas territories have benefited from the home student fee rate at British universities. In August 2015, the Island Council approved an education policy to provide equal and impartial educational opportunities for the Pitcairn Islands community. Students from overseas territories benefit from the home student rate for school fees at British universities provided that they have lived in a British overseas territory, the European Economic Area or Switzerland for the three years prior to the first academic year of their course of study.

30. Pitcairn has a museum, which was built using funds from a grant from the Government of the United Kingdom. Artefacts on display include stone tools made by Polynesians before the arrival of the mutineers, together with cannonballs, an anchor and a swivel gun from HMS *Bounty*. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church is the only church on the island.

F. Health care

31. A general practitioner is stationed on the island on a one-year contract, assisted by an assistant nurse. The Government of the United Kingdom has also funded a social welfare programme, which includes a family and community adviser. As on other Pacific islands, obesity and diabetes are health problems.

32. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the United Kingdom Department of Health's commitment to working in partnership with the territories and Public Health England to raise awareness of international health regulations and identify the tools and technical assistance required to enable the territories to strengthen compliance was welcomed. It was agreed to take forward a programme of joint work to support the territories' capacity and delivery of emergency response plans, including for pandemic outbreaks, and to deliver the tools, technical assistance and resources, where appropriate, to support the territories in promoting public health, taking account of the challenges faced by small and remote communities. The need to improve communications between the Department of Health and territories on health-related

matters was emphasized and potential solutions, including the development of telemedicine were discussed.

33. According to the multi-country cooperation strategy for the Pacific 2013-2017 of the World Health Organization, the leading causes of morbidity on Pitcairn include diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular disease, allergies and asthma. Pitcairn actively participates in the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network and closely monitors communicable diseases. Primary health care is available and accessible to all residents. Health care is financed by the Department for International Development. A growing health-related challenge is the extension of periods of drought. The health centre is equipped with a well-stocked dispensary and X-ray technology. The health worker-to-population ratio is 1:47.

G. Criminal justice

34. According to the United Kingdom, the criminal justice system on Pitcairn is administered through a combination of on-island and off-island processes. Criminal law is contained in local ordinances and regulations, as well as in English law of general application. Charges are laid by a police officer or the public prosecutor. Pitcairn has two police officers: a community police officer appointed from among the island residents and an officer who is recruited from New Zealand, usually for a period of 12 months. The public prosecutor is a lawyer qualified in a Commonwealth country.

35. A public defender is appointed by the Governor to represent defendants in criminal cases, and legal aid is available to any person who has insufficient means to obtain legal representation. A publicly funded community lawyer has also been appointed.

36. More minor criminal matters involving breaches of local ordinances or regulations can be heard before the Island Magistrate. Other summary offences and committal proceedings may be heard before the off-island magistrates in the Magistrate's Court. Magistrates must sit with assessors, selected randomly from among the island residents, for all criminal cases with penalties of more than $NZ 400, unless the defendant has admitted guilt or there are no eligible assessors. Indictable offences must be heard in the Supreme Court.

37. The Magistrate's Court and the Supreme Court may sit in Pitcairn, New Zealand or the United Kingdom. To allow for the distances and difficulty of travel to and from Pitcairn, a judge may order that a person involved in a proceeding participate by live video link. In making an order, the judge is required to give particular consideration to the impact of this on the defendant's right to a fair trial. Appeals can be made to the Court of Appeal and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Work is currently being carried out to further improve criminal procedure and the accessibility of the law and the courts.

IV. Environment

38. Water-quality testing is carried out in all residential and government buildings and data are recorded. Leaf catchers, first flush diverters and gutter guards have

been installed at all residential and government buildings to reduce contaminates. Water flow measurement data are collected from various springs and the secretariat of the Pacific Community is assisting in collating the data and providing technical assistance. A total of 240 water tanks, with a total storage capacity of 1.4 million litres, have been provided, for an overall increase of 268,000 litres. Weather observations are collected on a daily basis, and weather data have been collected since 1945. The secretariat of the Pacific Community provides technical assistance with graphs and averages.

39. In 2015, the Government of the United Kingdom launched its "Blue Belt" initiative, which, according to the administering Power, seeks to ensure that the marine environments around the overseas territories are managed in a way that minimizes environmental threats and provides resilience, as far as practicable, to environmental change, while enabling marine resources to be used for the benefit of local economies in a sustainable way.

40. As part of this initiative, on 15 September 2016, the Minister of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office announced that a law designating a marine protected area around the Pitcairn Islands had been brought into force. The administering Power indicated that the law prohibits fishing across more than 99 per cent of the 834,000 square km of ocean surrounding the Islands, while sustainable local fishing by Pitcairn residents will be preserved.

41. A goat eradication programme was carried out in May 2014, although some goats were left for pets or food.

42. The overseas territories biodiversity strategy of the United Kingdom has been devised as a key tool to enable the United Kingdom and overseas territorial Governments to meet the relevant international obligations for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. In April 2014, a report was published about ongoing and planned activities that are supported by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom, as well as its statutory adviser, the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, in each of the areas under the strategy. It was noted that the Government of the United Kingdom had awarded £249,946 through the Darwin Initiative to develop a sustainable marine and fisheries management plan for Pitcairn. The project, led by the University of Dundee, will produce a fully operational fisheries and marine management plan that is ecosystem-based and sustainable, which is crucial to providing a secure future for the community and protecting the unique marine biodiversity of Pitcairn. According to the administering Power, this project was near completion as of December 2016.

43. The uninhabited island of Henderson, designated a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1988, is the largest of the group and the richest in natural resources of the three satellite islands. Environmentalists visit Henderson from time to time, given that it is known for its endemic species of birds and plants in a near-pristine system. In 2011, a non-governmental organization led a project to eradicate rats, which were threatening the bird population. However, the project, to which the Government of the United Kingdom contributed more than £400,000, was unsuccessful and rats remain on the island. The Government of the United Kingdom and the relevant

stakeholders are investigating. On 12 September 2016, a report of the monitoring expedition conducted in 2015 by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to assess the situation was published. According to the report, while the reason for the unsuccessful eradication is unknown, the expedition identified a number of issues that need to be resolved before another eradication attempt is conducted. The report contains a recommendation that another scientific expedition will be necessary to assess the operational feasibility of another operation. According to public sources, the rat population is back to levels before the eradication project.

44. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, in 2016, the Government of the United Kingdom and the overseas territories recognized the impact that climate change had on the economies, infrastructure and ecosystems of the territories and the important interest of the overseas territories in international efforts to combat and mitigate the effects of climate change. The Government of the United Kingdom committed itself to consulting territorial Governments on the issue of the application of the Paris Agreement to the territories. It reiterated its full commitment to consulting the overseas territories ahead of its participation in international forums on climate change to ensure that their priorities were taken into account and to include them in delegations, where appropriate, while welcoming the territories' links with regional and international organizations.

V. Relations with international organizations and partners

45. Since January 2014, Pitcairn has been a partner under decision 2013/755/EU of the Council of the European Union on the association of the overseas countries and territories with the European Union, approved, among other things, in an effort to move away from a classic development cooperation approach to a reciprocal partnership that promotes sustainable development and the values and standards of the European Union in the wider world.

46. Pitcairn is a member of the Pacific Community, which is the oldest and largest organization in the 10-member Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific, a consultative process that is headed at the political level by the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat. The secretariat of the Pacific Community provides technical assistance, policy advice, training and research services to 22 Pacific island countries and territories in such areas as health, human development, agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Pitcairn also participates in the Pacific Community Coastal Fisheries Programme. The following international conventions have been extended to Pitcairn: the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In May 2016, the Island Council formally requested the extension of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to Pitcairn. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Government Equalities Office are liaising with Pitcairn as part of the extension process.

47. At the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, in 2016, the United Kingdom committed itself to involving Gibraltar and the overseas territories as it prepared for negotiations to leave the European Union in accordance with their various constitutional relationships with the United Kingdom, to ensure that their priorities were taken into account.

VI. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

48. The most recent statement by a representative of the island's Mayor was made during the Pacific regional seminar on advancing the decolonization process in the Pacific region, held in Madang, Papua New Guinea, from 18 to 20 May 2004. The statement is summarized in the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2004 (A/59/23).

B. Position of the administering Power

49. At the 7th meeting of the Fourth Committee, on 10 October 2016, during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the relationship of the Government of the United Kingdom with its overseas territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to choose to remain British.

50. He went on to say that, since the publication in June 2012 by the Government of the United Kingdom of a white paper entitled *The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability*, his Government had worked closely with the overseas territories to further develop those partnerships. At annual meetings of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the United Kingdom and the territories reviewed strategy and commitments and, in 2015, the United Kingdom had affirmed its commitment to the advancement of the peoples of the territories, their just treatment and protecting them from abuses and the importance of promoting their right to self-determination. His Government's fundamental responsibility was to ensure the security and good governance of the territories and their peoples.

51. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories stated that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, applied to the peoples of the overseas territories. They reaffirmed the importance of promoting the right of the peoples of the territories to self-determination, a collective responsibility of all parts of the Government of the United Kingdom. They committed themselves to exploring ways in which the overseas territories could maintain international support in countering hostile sovereignty claims. It was also stated that, should a territory with permanent populations wish it, the United Kingdom would continue to support its request to be removed from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. They agreed that the fundamental structure of their

constitutional relationships was the right one — powers were devolved to the elected Governments of the territories to the maximum extent possible consistent with the United Kingdom retaining those powers necessary to discharge its sovereign responsibilities. They also agreed upon the need to continue their engagement on those issues to ensure that constitutional arrangements worked effectively to promote the best interests of the territories and of the United Kingdom.

VII. Action taken by the General Assembly

52. On 6 December 2016, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution 71/115 on the basis of the report of the Special Committee the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2016 (A/71/23) and on the subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Pitcairn to self-determination, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

(b) Also reaffirmed that, in the process of the decolonization of Pitcairn, there is no alternative to the principle of self-determination, which is also a fundamental human right, as recognized under the relevant human rights conventions;

(c) Further reaffirmed that it is ultimately for the people of Pitcairn to determine freely their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and in that connection called upon the administering Power, in cooperation with the territorial Government and appropriate bodies of the United Nations system, to develop political education programmes for the Territory in order to foster an awareness among the people of their right to self-determination in conformity with the legitimate political status options, based on the principles clearly defined in Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) and other relevant resolutions and decisions;

(d) Welcomed all efforts by the administering Power and the territorial Government that would further devolve operational responsibilities to the Territory, with a view to gradually expanding self-government, including through the training of local personnel;

(e) Requested the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter, and in that regard called upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

(f) Also requested the administering Power to continue its assistance for the improvement of the economic, social, educational and other conditions of the population of the Territory and to continue its discussions with the territorial

Government on how best to support socioeconomic and environmental security in Pitcairn, including as regards demographic matters;

(g) Welcomed the work carried out on the preparation of the five-year strategic development plan for the island;

(h) Stressed the importance of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples being apprised of the views and wishes of the people of Pitcairn and enhancing its understanding of their conditions, including the nature and scope of the existing political and constitutional arrangements between Pitcairn and the administering Power;

(i) Called upon the administering Power to participate in and cooperate fully with the work of the Special Committee in order to implement the provisions of Article 73 *e* of the Charter and the Declaration and in order to advise the Committee on the implementation of the provisions under Article 73 *b* of the Charter on efforts to promote self-government in Pitcairn, and encouraged the administering Power to facilitate visiting and special missions to the Territory;

(j) Reaffirmed the responsibility of the administering Power under the Charter to promote the economic and social development and to preserve the cultural identity of the Territory, and requested the administering Power to take steps to enlist and make effective use of all possible assistance, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, in the strengthening of the economy of the Territory;

(k) Took into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, stressed the importance of fostering the economic and social sustainable development of the Territory by promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion and promoting the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems that supports, inter alia, economic, social and human development, while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration, restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges, and strongly urged the administering Power to refrain from undertaking any kind of illicit, harmful and unproductive activities, including the use of the Territory as a tax haven, that are not aligned with the interest of the people of the Territory;

(l) Requested the Territory and the administering Power to take all measures necessary to protect and conserve the environment of the Territory against any degradation, and once again requested the specialized agencies concerned to monitor environmental conditions in the Territory and to provide assistance to the Territory, consistent with their prevailing rules of procedure;

(m) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of Pitcairn and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session and on the implementation of the present resolution.

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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Saint Helena

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 8 December 2016. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

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The Territory at a glance

Territory: Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations, is administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Representative of administering Power: Governor Lisa Phillips (since April 2016).

Geography: Saint Helena is a small island of volcanic origin situated in the South Atlantic Ocean, approximately 1,900 km from Angola and 2,900 km from Brazil. Ascension lies 1,200 km to the north-west of Saint Helena, and Tristan da Cunha and the other small islands lie approximately 2,400 km to the south.

Land area: 310 km^2, consisting of the islands of Saint Helena and Ascension and the Tristan da Cunha group.

Exclusive economic zone: 1,641,294 km^2.

Population: 4,534 on Saint Helena (February 2016 census); 889 on Ascension (September 2016 estimate) and 268 on Tristan da Cunha (November 2015 estimate).

Life expectancy at birth: 75.7 years (women: 78.8 years, men: 72.9 years (2016 estimate))

Language: English.

Capital: Jamestown (Saint Helena), Georgetown (Ascension), Edinburgh of the Seven Seas (Tristan da Cunha).

Main political parties: None.

Elections: Most recent: Saint Helena: July 2013; Ascension: September 2016; Tristan da Cunha: March 2016.

Legislature: Unicameral Legislative Council on Saint Helena (15 seats, 12 elected members). Under the 2009 Constitution, the Governor, acting after consultation with the Island Council, may make laws for Ascension and Tristan da Cunha.

Gross domestic product per capita: £7,390 (Saint Helena 2014/15 estimate). According to the administering Power, because it has no permanent population, there is no gross domestic product for Ascension and data are unavailable for Tristan da Cunha.

Economy: Fishing, coffee, tourism, the sale of postage stamps. The economy of Saint Helena depends on financial assistance from the United Kingdom, as well as stamp sales, fishing and a small amount of tourism (entry permits, conservation tours). For Ascension, financial assistance is received from the United Kingdom and the main source of revenue is derived through taxes and business levies, with additional revenue from fishing, sales of stamps and coins, handicrafts and tourism. Tristan da Cunha receives some financial assistance from the United Kingdom for education, health care and public service training.

Unemployment rate: 0.35 per cent (October 2016 estimate), down from 1.8 per cent in 2008 for Saint Helena. On Ascension people must be employed to stay on the island, except for children and adult dependants. Full employment applies for Tristan da Cunha.

Monetary unit: Saint Helena pound, which is pegged to the pound sterling (Saint Helena and Ascension); pound sterling (Tristan da Cunha).

Brief history: The island of Saint Helena was reportedly discovered in 1502 by a Spanish navigator in the service of Portugal. By the end of the sixteenth century, it had become a port of call for ships en route from Europe to the East Indies. In 1633, it was formally annexed by the Netherlands. However, in 1659 the British East India Company took possession of the island. It officially became a Crown colony in 1833, was classified as a British dependent territory in 1981 and became a British overseas territory in 2002.

I. Constitutional, legal and political developments

1. The current Constitution of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha, which entered into force in September 2009, provides for the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual. The new Constitution changed the name of the Territory from "Saint Helena and its Dependencies" to "Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha", giving the three islands equal status within the Territory. The Head of the Government is the Governor, who is appointed by the British Crown. However, the ability of the Governor to act inconsistently with the wishes of elected councillors is curtailed in comparison with the previous Constitution. The British Overseas Territories Act 2002 grants British citizenship to "British overseas territory citizens" providing that certain qualifications are met.

2. The Legislative Council on Saint Helena comprises the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, three ex officio members (the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney General) and 12 elected members. The Executive Council, which is presided over by the Governor, consists of the ex officio members and five elected members from the Legislative Council. The ex officio members have no vote in either body. Elections are held by secret ballot, at intervals of not more than four years, by universal suffrage of those aged 18 years and over.

3. The 2009 Constitution contains enhanced provisions for ensuring the independence of the judiciary from the legislative and executive branches of the Government. The judicial system comprises the Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court and subordinate courts (currently the Magistrates' Court and the Labour Regulating Authority, to determine employment claims, others may be established by ordinance) and the Coroner, to investigate certain sudden or suspicious deaths. There remains a final appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in prescribed circumstances. The Media Commission has been established by ordinance and deals with complaints about breaches of the media codes of practice.

II. Budget

4. Owing to a small tax base due in part to migration and an ageing population, Saint Helena depends heavily on the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for funding. The European Union also provides budgetary support. According to information provided by the administering Power, total budgetary aid and shipping support from the Government of the United Kingdom reached £22.5 million for the financial year 2016/17, compared with £19.43 million during the previous period, representing an increase of 13.6 per cent. The 2016/17 aid package was approved in March 2016, following a visit to Saint Helena by representatives of the Department for International Development. Discussions for the next budget review, which will cover a three-year period, began in November 2016.

III. Economic conditions

A. General

5. The largest employer is the Government of Saint Helena. South Africa and the United Kingdom are the two largest sources of imports. The next largest sector for employment is retail and services. The local population also earns income from fishing, raising livestock and selling handicrafts. According to the administering Power, unemployment is very low at present, with new jobs currently available as a result of the building of the airport, the redevelopment of Rupert's Wharf and other infrastructure development. Consequently, incomes have grown strongly over the past three years, a period during which inflation has decreased significantly, with growth of the retail price index averaging 1.6 per cent from the fourth quarter in 2015 to the third quarter in 2016. Nevertheless, incomes remain comparatively low, and the cost of living is high, given that most goods must be imported. Consequently, prices are heavily influenced by external factors. According to the administering Power, Saint Helena expects that, once international air services begin to operate from its newly built airport, the significant increase in the number of visitors will help to develop the economy.

B. Development

6. Saint Helena is eligible to receive budget support from the European Union through the tenth European Development Fund, as are Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. Under the eleventh European Development Fund, the Territory has been granted an indicative amount of €21.5 million for the period 2014-2020. Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha also receive a proportion of the €5 million reserved by the Fund for isolated territories and can benefit from regional funding.

7. Disaster management and the response to major incidents and emergencies are managed through the Chief of Police, who serves as the Emergency Planning Coordinator. Working with the Governor, the Chief of Police and his emergency planning team have developed the island's first major incident response plan, supported by the island risk register. Multi-agency work has developed significantly through the creation of the Saint Helena Resilience Forum (replacing the Disaster Management Committee). The major incident response plan has been tested through a broad range of exercises and real-time incidents. Such incidents have included emerging risks, for example drought, as well as more immediate issues, such as rock falls and emergency responses to the new airport. Emergency planning on the island has been supplemented by the development of a local emergency planning officer who has been trained in the United Kingdom.

8. In 2016, a 10-year plan was developed for the period 2017-2027. According to the administering Power, the challenges beyond the immediate priority of achieving air access are as follows: (a) supporting adults with additional needs; (b) better and less expensive Internet services; (c) reducing high energy costs and switching to renewable energy; (d) implementing preventive and proactive models in health and education; (e) increasing the workforce to stimulate economic growth; (f) adopting sustainable and ethical development; (g) maintaining improvements made to core

services, such as safeguarding and health; (h) protecting vulnerable people; (i) improving the skills of Saint Helenians to take on more leadership roles; and (j) maintaining access to the island for people and goods. Particular challenges are caused by the ageing population, outward migration of labour to work mainly on the Falklands Islands (Malvinas)[1] and Ascension, and limited employment options, which makes recruitment difficult.

C. Fisheries and agriculture

9. Fisheries are an important sector of the economy of Saint Helena. According to the United Kingdom, five inshore boats fished there regularly in 2016. Local fishers sell their catch to the Saint Helena Fisheries Corporation. Fish purchases for the period from January to October 2016 amounted to 347.50 tons, compared with 171.87 tons during the same period the previous year. This increased catch was in part due to the presence of skipjack tuna within the inshore waters for a brief period. No licences for foreign fishing vessels were issued. In April and November 2015, two additional local fishing businesses began fishing operations in the offshore waters of the 200 nautical mile maritime zone of Saint Helena. The Territory now has four vessels fishing the offshore waters within that zone. The vessels regularly fish the offshore seamounts, which provides much-needed throughput to the cold stores on the island. Saint Helena is finalizing a 10-year strategy that promotes a safe, sustainable and environmentally friendly fishing industry. In addition, in the period 2013-2014, Saint Helena exported 573.5 kg of Arabica Green-Tipped Bourbon coffee. Exports were 532.5 kg in the period 2014-2015, and 832.5 kg in the period 2015-2016.

D. Transport and utilities

10. In November 2011, the Department for International Development and Saint Helena approved the construction of an airport on Saint Helena. The construction is now complete and the airport has successfully attained certification as a category C airport from the regulator, Air Safety Support International. Contracts have been signed to manage operations for a 10-year period and to operate a single weekly service between Johannesburg, South Africa, and Saint Helena. Scheduled services were not launched as planned in May 2016, owing to turbulence and wind shear identified on the approach path to the main, northern end of the runway, during test flights in April. Since then, Saint Helena and the Department have been working intensively to better understand the wind conditions and identify how to mitigate the challenges that they present. The southern approach does not experience severe wind shear, but requires a tailwind approach. Data on the tailwind speeds, and in particular the frequency with which they exceed aircraft performance limits, are being collected.

11. According to the administering Power, the airport is open and operational: air traffic currently consists of private charter and medical evacuation flights. The Government of Saint Helena is seeking to establish a regular scheduled air service

[1] A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

and is expected to commence procurement of an air service provider before the end of 2016, a process that will include the need for an air link between Ascension and Saint Helena. In the meantime, scheduled access to the island remains by sea using the Royal Mail Ship *St Helena*; the round trip from Cape Town, South Africa, takes 18 days, which includes the connecting voyage to Ascension. The vessel has been in service for more than 25 years. On 12 May 2015, the Executive Council approved the shipping schedule from April to July 2016 and the proposed booking policy for the final voyages of the vessel in view of the proposed official opening of the airport in 2016. This was subsequently extended to July 2017, including the Saint Helena-Ascension leg of the service. The construction of a wharf in Rupert's Bay is largely completed, with attention now turning to plans to make Rupert's Wharf operational. The wharf will enable the separation of cargo activity (to take place in Rupert's Wharf in the future) from passenger handling activity, which will continue in James Bay.

12. The Territory has some 168 km of paved roads (118 km on Saint Helena, 40 km on Ascension and 10 km on Tristan da Cunha) and 30 km of unpaved roads (20 km on Saint Helena and 10 km on Tristan da Cunha).

13. Saint Helena has two local radio stations and two satellite television stations that are rebroadcast terrestrially. Ascension has one local radio station and receives relays of broadcasts from Saint Helena. Broadcasts from the British Forces Broadcasting Service are available, as are television services for the United States military. Tristan da Cunha has one local radio station and receives television and radio broadcasts from the British Forces Broadcasting Service.

14. Saint Helena has benefited from upgrades to its electricity infrastructure. Wind power has become a reliable source of energy. A solar farm constructed and completed in May 2015 contributes some 10 per cent of the island's electricity and has a peak capacity of 500 kW. Further increases are planned.

15. The Department for International Development has provided funding for water infrastructure upgrades. Work currently funded and in progress is the increase in water storage through additional and improved reservoirs. Commercial recycling of waste is now required to maximize efficiencies and fully realize the benefits of the investment that was already made.

E. Banking and credit

16. The Bank of Saint Helena is the sole banking entity; it is a limited company, and the Government of Saint Helena owns the bank as a majority shareholder. It provides banking services and related financial services within Saint Helena and its sub-branch on Ascension through its core products: current, deposit and savings accounts; and personal, housing and commercial loans. The Bank offers various services, including teller services, an international remittance service and online banking services. A local debit card pilot programme was expected to be launched by the end of November 2016 with a view to rolling it out to all customers by February 2017.

17. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, held in London on 1 and 2 November 2016, the overseas

territories and the United Kingdom reiterated their mutual determination to continue to tackle corruption, fraud, money-laundering, and the financing of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and to further enhance transparency and law enforcement cooperation in the context of financial services. They also reiterated their shared commitment to providing the leadership necessary to meet the June 2017 deadline for the implementation of new arrangements regarding the exchange of beneficial ownership information on companies incorporated in their jurisdictions and to continuing to provide the highest levels of law enforcement cooperation possible before that date.

F. Tourism

18. According to the administering Power and the Government of Saint Helena, the new airport is the best way to bring new financial opportunities to the island and promote tourism. The rugged natural beauty of the Territory, its rare wildlife and its historic sites, such as Longwood House and Napoleon's tomb, are expected to attract visitors. Of the 3,536 passengers who arrived on the Royal Mail Ship *St Helena* in 2015/16, 712 were excursion (i.e., leisure) visitors. A further 596 visitors arrived on yachts and 5,768 on cruise ships. The anticipated increase in leisure visitors for 2016 did not materialize because of the delay in establishing regular commercial flights.

IV. Social conditions

A. General

19. According to the administering Power, following the reintroduction of the grant of British citizenship to Saint Helenians in 2002, the island experienced an exodus. The population census conducted in 2016 showed some recovery, with 4,203 Saint Helenians present on census night, an increase of 5.5 per cent from 2008. The increase in population began with the air access project, which has resulted in an increasing number of Saint Helenians returning to the island to take advantage of improved employment and business development opportunities. The results of the census show a total resident population of 4,534, in addition to 268 visitors, bringing the total number of persons present to 4,802.

20. Measured by international standards, Saint Helena is an upper middle-income Territory with few signs of real material poverty, according to information provided by the administering Power. Gross national income per capita in 2014/15 was estimated at £7,100 or $10,300 (international purchasing power parity). This is in line with the Territory's annual analysis of income from employment. A minimum income standard, introduced in July 2013, protects against poverty by providing an income-related benefit to households in receipt of income below this threshold. As at October 2016, 153 households were in receipt of income-related benefits, which represent 8.3 per cent of occupied dwellings. While poverty rates are low, there are growing concerns regarding relative poverty and income inequality as the economy grows.

21. The census showed the old-age dependency ratio on Saint Helena to be 35 per cent, with an overall age dependency ratio of 56 per cent. This places Saint Helena among the highest age dependency ratios in the world, with little potential for natural population change to remedy the situation in the foreseeable future. The ageing population has increased the need for substantial investment in a new care programme for older persons. As at October 2016, it was estimated that 20 per cent of the population, 938 people, were of 65 years of age or over, of whom 684 received the basic island pension. The population of older persons, classed as those of 75 years or older, is currently 7 per cent of the resident population, or approximately 325 people. Population projections show that these figures will continue to increase over the coming 10 years, with an average of 34 people a year reaching 65 years of age and 18 reaching of 75 years of age.

22. There is one general hospital in Jamestown, as well as four health clinics serving people living in rural areas, and two residential units providing care and support for individuals with learning and physical disabilities. Clinical areas in the hospital were partially refurbished in 2015-2016, with the installation of improved diagnostic capabilities (including a computed tomography scanner and radiography room), a two-bed intensive care unit and a new operating theatre and co-located delivery suite. In addition, the island has two family centres for children and young people who need protection and supported accommodation and two locations for vulnerable and older persons.

23. The *Wass Inquiry Report into Allegations Surrounding Child Safeguarding Issues on Saint Helena and Ascension Island* was published on 10 December 2015. The Wass Inquiry was commissioned by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as a result of allegations made that child sexual abuse was endemic in Saint Helena and that the Government of Saint Helena, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development were concealing child abuse. It found no evidence of endemic child sexual abuse, corruption, cover-up or tolerance of abuse on Saint Helena or Ascension. Nevertheless, according to information provided by the administering Power, it did find systematic and historical failings by the Government of Saint Helena, including failings in relation to the health and safeguarding of vulnerable people, and made recommendations, all of which were accepted by both the Governments of the United Kingdom and Saint Helena. Nevertheless, it also found evidence of significant progress having been made on Saint Helena and Ascension in relation to safeguarding. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office appointed a senior official of the Government of the United Kingdom to support the Governments of Saint Helena and Ascension in implementing the recommendations. A report was published in July 2016 and detailed the substantial progress made.

24. The Saint Helena Government Safeguarding Directorate is now fully operational and a key component of multi-agency working arrangements led by the Safeguarding Board. Following a request and the granting of an additional £2.7 million in total during 2014/15 and 2015/16 from the Government of the United Kingdom, key additional staff have been recruited, safeguarding training has been delivered and systems to improve border security and intelligence have been procured. Additional funding was also provided to improve services for vulnerable adults and for residential care. This has seen several services now delivered in the community, including a social club for vulnerable adults. Non-governmental

organizations have been supported to deliver appropriate activities and their representatives have also attended safeguarding training. Thanks to increased public confidence in the system, the number of referrals to social services and the police has increased significantly.

25. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the United Kingdom and the overseas territories, including Saint Helena, agreed to work together to conduct a review of reservations to core United Nations human rights treaties ahead of the preparation of the report of the United Kingdom under the universal periodic review conducted by the Human Rights Council, to be submitted in 2017. They also committed themselves to working together to further develop the capacity of territories' national human rights institutions, where established, in line with the international standards set out in the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles), and to deepening understanding of their shared obligations with regard to international human rights.

26. White Ribbon Day was celebrated on Saint Helena in 2016 with events at local schools with school-children wearing white and recreating the white ribbon symbol by gathering at the island's main sports field. A ceremony, attended by the Governor, was held on the afternoon of 25 November in Jamestown. It was open to the public to attend with a view to encouraging commitment to breaking the silence on domestic violence. The event included personal accounts from survivors of domestic violence with the theme of "Together we can end domestic violence". In mid-2016 a women's shelter was opened for survivors of domestic abuse.

B. Employment

27. A significant number of Saint Helenians are employed off-island, especially on Ascension, in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)[1] or in the United Kingdom. Many contracts for such employment are for unaccompanied workers, resulting in a significant social burden and separated families. In addition, according to the administering Power, the loss of trained staff to better-paid off-island employment makes it necessary to bring in a range of internationally recruited staff in a number of sectors.

28. As a result of the construction of the airport, which began in late 2011, the demand for workers increased significantly. At the height of the construction phase, over 600 personnel were employed, of whom more than 400 were Saint Helenian. In November 2016, 279 personnel were employed on the project, of whom 118 were Saint Helenian. The release of workers from the project as construction neared completion benefited other sectors of the economy where labour-force availability had been a constraint. With only 15 individuals on average in receipt of unemployment allowance during 2016, equivalent to 0.5 per cent of the economically active population, the lack of additional labour-force capacity constrains growth in the private sector.

C. Education

29. Education is compulsory and free for children between 5 and 16 years of age. There are currently four schools in operation, comprising three all-through primary schools (for pupils aged 3-11 years) and one secondary school (for pupils aged 11-18 years). Pupils over 16 years of age may opt for academic or vocational courses accredited by the United Kingdom. Since September 2009, distance-learning opportunities have been included in the curriculum of the secondary school. The Education and Employment Directorate is also responsible for the training and retraining of employees in the public and private sectors, through its lifelong learning service. Work in this area was extended in 2016 with the opening of the Saint Helena Community College, which offers local access to a wide range of professional qualifications and higher education courses (to degree level) through blended learning. Students from overseas territories benefit from the home student rate for school fees at British universities provided that they have lived in a British overseas territory, the European Economic Area or Switzerland for the three years prior to the first academic year of their course of study.

30. Retaining qualified, experienced staff continues to be a challenge. Provisions are now in place to raise the overall quality of teaching through professional development. Internationally accredited qualifications are offered to current teaching staff through a partnership with a provider from the United Kingdom. According to the administering Power, a new salary structure for education now provides significant rewards for teachers who pursue improved qualifications. In addition, a new local initial teacher training programme offering accredited training through a United Kingdom university was established in September 2016.

31. Although there have been some gains in education outcomes in recent years, there remains considerable variation by year. In 2016, 22 per cent of pupils achieved five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education passes with a grade C or higher, including English and mathematics, compared with 49 per cent in 2014 and 18 per cent in 2015. A-level results have risen significantly, and in 2016 seven very successful A-level students, the largest such cohort in the Territory's history, were awarded scholarships for overseas study. Primary education standards have also improved in recent years, especially in reading, where 71 per cent of pupils achieved United Kingdom standards in 2016. Overall, however, primary standards still lag behind United Kingdom benchmarks, although work is underway to raise standards, especially in mathematics. Inclusion is a key focus within schools, with all schools sharing a commitment to providing opportunities for all pupils. Saint Helena offers robust programmes to support adult learners, with a range of academic and vocational courses offered through the Community College.

D. Environment

32. According to the administering Power, the isolated position of Saint Helena has given rise to an unusual and remarkable array of terrestrial and marine flora and fauna. Saint Helena has a high level of endemicity, and some 30 per cent of species endemic to the United Kingdom and its overseas territories are found there. As more baseline biodiversity surveys are undertaken and knowledge and understanding of

species increases, new endemic species may be found. The natural and cultural heritage of Saint Helena are its key assets and a key building block on which to establish its tourism industry, although both areas have been negatively affected by a lack of sustained investment. Saint Helena relies heavily on project funding to support conservation initiatives. In 2016, approval for three project bids was received totalling £589,523 from the Overseas Territories Environment and Climate Fund, also known as Darwin Plus.

33. While some waste management, for example hazardous-waste management, continues to be a challenge for the island, a capital-funded solid-waste management project has brought about improvements. In addition to a redeveloped landfill site, a public recycling facility has been established and the clean-up of homes and island areas has benefited from the introduction of a free service for the collection of bulk waste. Currently, most waste streams are still going to landfill, including commercially viable wastes such as metals, plastics and kitchen waste, although some glass and paper and cardboard are now recycled. According to the administering Power, there is a potential opportunity for the private sector to develop businesses that process and reuse waste materials.

34. In September 2016 Saint Helena declared the creation of a category VI marine protected area extending 200 nautical miles. In parallel, a marine management plan was published that prohibits any exploitation of the natural resources within the marine protected area that is not undertaken in a controlled, sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner.

35. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council in 2016, the Government of the United Kingdom and the overseas territories recognized the impact that climate change had on the economies, infrastructure and ecosystems of the territories and the important interest of the overseas territories in international efforts to combat and mitigate the effects of climate change. The Government of the United Kingdom committed itself to consulting with territorial Governments on the issue of the application of the Paris Agreement to the territories. It reiterated its full commitment to consulting the overseas territories ahead of its participation in international forums on climate change to ensure that their priorities were taken into account and to including them in delegations where appropriate, while welcoming the territories' links with regional and international organizations.

V. Ascension

A. Constitutional and political status

36. Executive authority for Ascension is exercised by the Governor of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. The resident Administrator is appointed by, and reports to, the Governor. The Governor is advised by the Island Council, currently comprising five elected members and three ex officio members: the Administrator, the Director of Resources and the Attorney General. Ex officio members have no voting rights. The current Administrator, Marc Holland, was sworn in on 26 August 2014. The Administrator represents the Governor of the

Territory, is the Head of the Government of Ascension and, as an ex officio member, chairs the Island Council in the Governor's absence.

37. Elections are held every three years, the most recent general election having been held in August 2016. All registered voters over 18 years of age are eligible to vote. Under the 2009 Constitution, the Governor, acting after consultation with the Island Council, may make laws for Ascension. Ascension has its own legislation but Saint Helenian law applies to the extent that it is not inconsistent with local law, insofar as it is suitable for local circumstances and subject to such modifications as local circumstances make necessary.

38. There are six full-time Saint Helena police officers on detachment to Ascension, including a senior officer with the rank of Inspector, who reports to the Chief of Police on Saint Helena. The Chief Magistrate on Saint Helena serves as the Magistrate on Ascension, supported by four local lay magistrates. The Saint Helena Public Solicitor provides legal advice to residents of Ascension and is supported on site by two local lay advocates and the Assistant Public Solicitor.

B. Economic and social conditions

39. Residence on Ascension is dependent upon employment and, consequently, according to the administering Power, the population of Ascension enjoys full employment (or they are dependants of employed people). It is currently estimated that 6 per cent (51 people) of the population are adult dependants who have accompanied their working partner. Residents of Ascension have no right of abode, although some have been on the island for more than 50 years and have children and grandchildren residing there, according to the administering Power. Services are mostly provided by the Government. A private sector company provides the water and electricity supply to most of the island, with the United States military base providing its own supply. There are no commercial exports and little indigenous food production apart from a newly established hydroponics facility set up by the Government. The economy is somewhat fragile and is dependent upon the defence and communication organizations based on the island. As a result of the economic situation and technological change, the population has fallen to under 900 people. Government activities are funded through, among other things, business levies, property tax, income tax and customs duties. The revenues raised cover the expenditure necessary for the provision of essential public services. There is a continued requirement to invest in the island's infrastructure, balanced with the need to create sufficient liquid reserves.

40. The sale of offshore fishing licences was placed on hold in 2014 and the Government introduced a new, improved, licensing regime at the end of 2015, alongside a large closed area (over 50 per cent of the economic fishing zone) as part of the United Kingdom government manifesto commitment to create a large marine protected area around Ascension. There has since been few applications for commercial fishing licenses in the open area. A few inshore fishing boats fish recreationally, provide the local community with fresh fish. Sport fishing continues to develop, bringing more visitors to the island each year.

41. Health services are provided through the fully functioning hospital in Georgetown. If treatment is not possible locally, cases are referred to the United

Kingdom. In support of a healthy lifestyle, there are two gyms on both military bases, three swimming pools and other sporting facilities that are available to islanders.

42. On 9 October 2015, the Governments of Ascension and Saint Helena announced that an air service providing a direct link between Ascension and Saint Helena would be available once the Royal Mail Ship had been decommissioned. Nevertheless, the opening of the airport on Saint Helena to commercial flights has been delayed while problems with wind shear are investigated and the *St Helena* has continued to provide a transport link between the islands.

43. The school in Two Boats provides education to all children from the age of 3 to 16 years old, which is the General Certificate of Secondary Education level. A safeguarding children board is in place and members include a social worker and representatives of the police and the health and education sectors. The employment of a full-time social worker has significantly raised standards. A special representative commissioned by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office concluded that Ascension had made good progress in implementing the recommendations of the Wass Inquiry into child safeguarding. Safeguarding standards are being aligned with the United Kingdom where appropriate, and policies and procedures are being implemented to support the standards. According to the administering Power, success has been noted in the regulating of and registering of childminders whose provision of preschool childcare is vital because there are currently no such facilities on the island. Community education and engagement across the wide range of community members also increases safeguarding awareness and access to a social welfare provision.

C. Environment

44. In its fifth national report to the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, submitted in April 2014, the United Kingdom noted that biodiversity on Ascension did not represent a great contribution to the local economy. Small amounts of revenue are created from tourists (through entry permit fees and wildlife tours), and visitors also come for sports-fishing holidays. The island has the second-largest nesting population of green sea-turtles in the Atlantic Ocean and the largest nesting population of any marine turtle species in all of the United Kingdom overseas territories. The biodiversity of Ascension is greatly threatened by alien invasive species and, in particular, by introduced plants and mammals.

45. The Conservation Department continues to develop and has succeeded in implementing several projects, such as programmes dealing with seabirds, invasive species, endemic plants, land crabs and marine conservation, including fisheries. Key project and research areas are set out within the Ascension Island biodiversity action plan. Partners in these projects are the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Kew Gardens, the Darwin Initiative, the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute, the Zoological Society of London, the Universities of Exeter and Birmingham and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. Alongside the National Park of Green Mountain, there are six nature reserves, created to protect the island's critical flora and fauna. A biodiversity and fisheries committee, including members

from the Council, works with the Conservation Department and stakeholders in order to formulate legislation for the protection of the island's natural resources. A low volume of tourism is also developing within this sector. Work has begun to define the area to be covered by the marine protected area.

VI. Tristan da Cunha

A. Constitutional and political status

46. Executive authority for Tristan da Cunha is exercized by the Governor of Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha. The resident Administrator is appointed by, and reports to, the Governor. Sean Burns returned as the Administrator in December 2016. The Governor is advised by the Island Council, comprising the Administrator, who is the President of the Council, eight elected members (including the Chief Islander and at least one woman) and three appointed members. Elections are held every three years. All registered voters over 18 years of age are eligible to vote. Under the 2009 Constitution, the Governor, after consulting with the Island Council, may make laws for Tristan da Cunha.

47. Tristan da Cunha has its own legislation, but Saint Helena law applies to the extent that it is not inconsistent with local law, insofar as it is suitable for local circumstances and subject to such modifications as local circumstances make necessary. As a last resort, the laws of England and Wales apply. There are two special constables and one full-time police officer. The Administrator also serves as the Magistrate.

B. Economic and social conditions

48. The economy of Tristan da Cunha is based on traditional subsistence farming and fishing. Rock lobster is sustainably fished and exported to Australia, the European Union, Japan and the United States of America. The decision by the European Union in August 2014 to allow access to its market to lobsters from Tristan da Cunha was a major milestone.

49. Since 2007, Tristan da Cunha has enjoyed limited telecommunications. Internet access is now available to the community through an Internet cafe and a Wi-Fi system, although it is very slow. Options to improve connectivity are being considered.

50. In 2009, the Island Council set out broad strategies to secure the island's financial future. According to the United Kingdom, even with such reforms, the island would very soon become insolvent unless further drastic measures were taken. In 2011, a thorough review of budgets was undertaken and strict rules on procurement and expenditure were introduced. According to the administering Power, external financial assistance with infrastructure projects and capacity-building continue to be needed.

51. The Department for International Development funds the position of resident doctors. To build capacity on the island, it also funds several expatriate positions, including two clinical nurses, a finance officer, a commercial officer, teachers, a

social worker, the Director of Public Works and an agricultural adviser. The Department also sponsors annual dental and biennial optometrist visits as well as visits by other medical specialists and a vet, when required. It had been several years since the island's inhabitants had had access to off-island training, but, since 2012, the Department has funded training both on and off the island (the latter in the Isle of Man, Jersey and South Africa). This training has been provided across the Administration, covering the following areas: fisheries, tourism, post office services, public works, communications and information technology.

52. Pupils leave school at 16 years of age and tend to work in the Government or the fishing sector. They have no opportunity to proceed to higher education unless they leave the Territory. The current staff members are, by their own admission, not formally qualified. There are now five expatriate teachers in the school, with contracts ranging from six months to two years. The post of education adviser is currently vacant.

C. Environment

53. Tristan da Cunha is successfully implementing conservation projects with help from its partners, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The projects run by the Overseas Territory Environmental Programme include efforts to remove invasive species from uninhabited islands in the Tristan da Cunha group and studies on the feasibility of eradicating rodents. Tristan da Cunha also has a biodiversity action plan to help it to meet its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The plan was updated in 2012 to cover a five-year period until 2017. It was recently announced that Tristan da Cunha hopes to designate the pristine waters around the archipelago as a protected area by 2020.

VII. Relations with international organizations and partners

54. As a Non-Self-Governing Territory of the United Kingdom, Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha are associated with, but not part of, the European Union. The Territory is a member of the South Atlantic Territories Cooperation Forum.

55. Since January 2014, the Territory has been a partner of the European Union under Council decision 2013/755/EU of 25 November 2013 on the association of overseas countries and territories with the European Union, which was approved in an effort to move away from a classic development cooperation approach to a reciprocal partnership that promotes sustainable development and the values and standards of the European Union in the wider world.

56. At the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council in 2016, the United Kingdom committed itself to involving Gibraltar and the overseas territories as it prepared for negotiations to leave the European Union, in accordance with their various constitutional relationships with the United Kingdom, to ensure that their priorities were taken into account.

VIII. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

57. Information on political and constitutional developments regarding the status of Saint Helena is reflected in section I above.

B. Position of the administering Power

58. At the 7th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), on 10 October 2016, during the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the relationship of the Government of the United Kingdom with its overseas territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to choose to remain British.

59. He went on to say that, since the publication in June 2012 by the Government of the United Kingdom of a white paper entitled *The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability*, his Government had worked closely with the overseas territories to further develop those partnerships. At annual meetings of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the United Kingdom and the territories reviewed strategy and commitments and in 2015, the United Kingdom had affirmed its commitment to the advancement of the peoples of the territories, their just treatment and protecting them from abuses and the importance of promoting their right to self-determination. His Government's fundamental responsibility was to ensure the security and good governance of the territories and their peoples.

60. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories stated that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, applied to the peoples of the overseas territories. They reaffirmed the importance of promoting the right of the peoples of the territories to self-determination, a collective responsibility of all parts of the Government of the United Kingdom. They committed themselves to exploring ways in which the overseas territories could maintain international support in countering hostile sovereignty claims. It was also stated that, should a Territory with a permanent population wish it, the United Kingdom would continue to support its requests to be removed from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. They agreed that the fundamental structure of their constitutional relationships was the right one — powers were devolved to the elected Governments of the territories to the maximum extent possible consistent with the United Kingdom's retaining those powers necessary to discharge its sovereign responsibilities. They also agreed upon the need to continue their engagement on those issues to ensure that constitutional arrangements worked effectively to promote the best interests of the territories and of the United Kingdom.

IX. Action taken by the General Assembly

61. On 6 December 2016, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/116 without a vote, on the basis of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2016 (A/71/23) and the subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Saint Helena to self-determination, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

(b) Also reaffirmed that, in the process of decolonization of Saint Helena, there was no alternative to the principle of self-determination, which was also a fundamental human right, as recognized under the relevant human rights conventions;

(c) Further reaffirmed that it was ultimately for the people of Saint Helena to determine freely their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and in that connection called upon the administering Power, in cooperation with the territorial Government and appropriate bodies of the United Nations system, to develop political education programmes for the Territory in order to foster an awareness among the people of their right to self-determination in conformity with the legitimate political status options, based on the principles clearly defined in Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) and other relevant resolutions and decisions;

(d) Stressed the importance of the 2009 Constitution of the Territory and the further development of democratic and good governance;

(e) Requested the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter, and in that regard called upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

(f) Requested the administering Power and relevant international organizations to continue to support the efforts of the territorial Government to address the socioeconomic development challenges of the Territory;

(g) Stressed the importance of the Special Committee's being apprised of the views and wishes of the people of Saint Helena and enhancing its understanding of their conditions, including the nature and scope of the existing political and constitutional arrangements between Saint Helena and the administering Power;

(h) Called upon the administering Power to participate in and cooperate fully with the work of the Special Committee in order to implement the provisions of Article 73 *e* of the Charter and the Declaration and in order to advise the Committee on the implementation of the provisions under Article 73 *b* of the Charter on efforts to promote self-government in Saint Helena, and encouraged the administering Power to facilitate visiting and special missions to the Territory;

(i) Reaffirmed the responsibility of the administering Power under the Charter to promote the economic and social development and to preserve the cultural identity of the Territory, and requested the administering Power to take steps to enlist and make effective use of all possible assistance, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, in the strengthening of the economy of the Territory;

(j) Took into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, stressed the importance of fostering the economic and social sustainable development of the Territory by promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion and promoting the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems that supported, inter alia, economic, social and human development, while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration, restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges, and strongly urged the administering Power to refrain from undertaking any kind of illicit, harmful and unproductive activities, including the use of the Territory as a tax haven, that were not aligned with the interest of the people of the Territory;

(k) Requested the Territory and the administering Power to take all measures necessary to protect and conserve the environment of the Territory against any degradation, and once again requested the specialized agencies concerned to monitor environmental conditions in the Territory and to provide assistance to the Territory, consistent with their prevailing rules of procedure;

(l) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of Saint Helena and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session and on the implementation of the present resolution.

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Tokelau

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 8 December 2016. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

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The Territory at a glance

Territory: Tokelau is a Non-Self-Governing Territory, as defined under the Charter of the United Nations, administered by New Zealand.

Representative of administering Power: Administrator David Nicholson

Geography: Tokelau comprises three small atolls: Fakaofo, Nukunonu and Atafu. Each atoll comprises strips of land up to 200 m wide and not more than 5 m above sea level. Samoa, located 480 km to the south, is the nearest sizeable neighbour and the principal point of contact for Tokelau with the outside world. Access is possible only by ship, with an average of 30 hours' sailing from Samoa. There is no air service.

Land area: 12.2 km²

Exclusive economic zone: 318,990 km²

Population: 1,499 (October 2016 census), as follows: Atafu — 519, Fakaofo — 448, Nukunonu — 448 and Samoa — 48 (Tokelau Public Service employees and their immediate families). There are 7,176 Tokelauans living in New Zealand (2013 census). As New Zealand citizens, Tokelauans may also reside in Australia.

Life expectancy at birth: 69 1 years (women: 70.4 years; men: 67.8 years (2010-2015 estimates))

Ethnic composition: Tokelauans are Polynesians with linguistic, familial and cultural links with Samoa.

Languages: Tokelauan. English and Samoan are also widely used.

Capital: None. Each atoll has its own administrative centre.

Head of territorial Government: Ulu-o-Tokelau. The position rotates annually among the leaders of each atoll.

Main political parties: None

Elections: Held in January every third year. The most recent election was held on 23 January 2014; the next is due to be held in January 2017.

Legislature: The unicameral General Fono

Economy: The principal sources of revenue are assistance provided by New Zealand through budgetary support and project funding, and fees from fisheries licences.

Monetary unit: New Zealand dollar (SNZ)

Gross domestic product per capita: SNZ 5,050 (*Tokelau Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2015-2016*)

Brief history: Originally inhabited by Polynesians from surrounding islands, Tokelau became a British protectorate in 1889, and in 1925, administration was transferred to New Zealand. By the Tokelau Act 1948, sovereignty over Tokelau was transferred to New Zealand.

I. Constitutional and political developments

A. Local self-governance

1. As previously reported, the current process of constitutional development stems from the 1998 decision of the General Fono (the national representative body) to endorse a comprehensive report entitled "Modern house of Tokelau", which addressed the core issue that faced Tokelau in creating a constitutional framework that suited an atoll- or village-based self-governing community that respected traditional decision-making customs.

2. In accordance with the terms of that report, General Fono delegates are now elected on the basis of proportional village representation, with a system of universal village suffrage rather than of equal village representation with delegates appointed by the respective village councils (taupulega), as was previously the case. In 2004, further decisions were made on the method of appointment of the Chair of the General Fono and on the role and responsibilities of the six-person Council for the Ongoing Government, which is the executive Government when the General Fono is not in session. The Council consists of three faipule (representatives of each village) and one General Fono delegate from each village, designated by the taupulega. The position of Ulu-o-Tokelau, or Head of Government, rotates annually among the three faipule. In February 2016, the Faipule of Fakaofo took over as Ulu-o-Tokelau. In February 2017, the Faipule of Nukunonu is expected to rotate into the position.

3. In its most recent election, on 23 January 2014, Tokelau elected its new General Fono, which represents the three atolls (Fakaofo, Atafu and Nukunonu). In terms of representation in the General Fono, currently Atafu has seven delegates, Nukunonu has six and Fakaofo has seven. It was the first time that the election had been based on common national basic criteria in all three villages. In all, 9 of the 20 positions in the General Fono went to new candidates. Three of the positions are held by women, who each represent the Fatupaepae (Women's Committee) on each atoll. At the time of writing of the present report (mid-January 2017), the next election is scheduled for January 2017, when each atoll will elect five delegates based on population figures from the census held on 18 October 2016 (see para. 23).

4. Since 2004, the three village councils have taken full responsibility for all village public services. That decision emanated from the Modern House of Tokelau approach, whereby the traditional Council of Elders on each atoll serves as the foundation for any future governance structure. Under that arrangement, the councils delegate authority to the General Fono for activities that need to be handled at the national level (see A/AC.109/2005/3). The New Zealand official with principal responsibility for relations with Tokelau is the Administrator of Tokelau. The newly appointed Administrator will be based in Apia, where he will concurrently serve as High Commissioner to Samoa. The Administrator is appointed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand.

5. David Nicholson is the current Administrator and the High Commissioner designate to Samoa (his appointment as Administrator took effect on 28 November 2016, and he will take up his concurrent role as High Commissioner to Samoa). The Office of the Administrator draws on advice and support from the New Zealand

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, including the Special Relations Unit within the Pacific and Development Group.

B. Referendum process

6. In 2003, the General Fono took a formal decision, with the support of all three village councils, to endorse self-government in free association with New Zealand as the choice to be actively explored with the Government of New Zealand. In August 2005, the General Fono approved a draft constitution, as the basis for the proposed act of self-determination, and the text of a draft treaty of free association. In November 2005, the Cabinet of New Zealand gave its formal approval. The referendum package, consisting of the draft treaty and the draft constitution, was to form the basis of the referendum on self-determination. In line with a decision by the General Fono, an overall majority of two thirds of the valid votes cast was required for a change to the status of Tokelau.

7. The first referendum on self-determination was held sequentially in Apia and on the three atolls from 11 to 15 February 2006 (see A/AC.109/2006/20). The outcome fell short of the required two-thirds majority, with 60 per cent of valid Tokelauan votes cast in favour of self-government in free association with New Zealand. The United Nations, which formally monitored the referendum, deemed the process credible and reflective of the will of the people of Tokelau. A representative of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, accompanied by a Political Affairs Officer of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, also observed the referendum process.

8. In August 2006, the General Fono voted to hold a second referendum on Tokelauan self-determination in late 2007. The proposed constitution and the draft treaty, commonly referred to as the self-determination package, were to be the same, and the legal threshold for acceptance of the proposal would remain at a two-thirds majority.

9. The second referendum was held from 20 to 24 October 2007. The result, with 64.4 per cent in favour, was again below the two-thirds threshold, thereby leaving the status of the Territory unchanged (see A/AC.109/2007/19). As with the first referendum, the United Nations formally monitored the voting, with representatives of the Special Committee and the Department of Political Affairs present as observers.

10. Following the results of the second referendum, the General Fono requested the Government of New Zealand to keep on the table the entire self-determination package (namely, the draft treaty and draft constitution that had been agreed upon and had served as the foundation for the previous ballots). The Council for the Ongoing Government noted that Tokelau could in the future change the two-thirds majority threshold for the referendum, but should put in place measures to ensure that a threshold would be supported by a clear majority in each village, to guarantee unity. The Council also noted the Territory's strong commitment to self-determination and its wish to have a constitution, albeit one that did not encompass the provisions for free association and self-government.

11. The outcomes of the referendums, neither of which reached the threshold of support set by the General Fono for a change of status, have been acknowledged and accepted by New Zealand. As a follow-up to the result of the referendum held in 2007, the then Prime Minister of New Zealand met the leaders of Tokelau in February 2008 to discuss the next steps in the New Zealand-Tokelau relationship. It was agreed that a "pause" should be taken in the self-determination efforts of Tokelau and that, in the meantime, Tokelau would focus on meeting its basic needs. That remains the situation.

II. Economic conditions

A. General economic overview

12. Tokelau faces major constraints to its economic growth, including such natural disadvantages as small size, isolation, distances between the atolls, lack of natural resources and natural disasters. The economic stability of the Territory has to date been made possible by the high levels of assistance provided by the administering Power. With the continued assistance of New Zealand, the Council for the Ongoing Government intends to maintain its focus on improving the delivery of core public services (such as education, health and policing) and completing key infrastructure projects, such as schools, hospitals, renewable energy, telecommunications, transport and strengthening the Council and the Tokelau Public Service.

13. As part of the new fisheries policy aimed at maximizing the economic benefits from the sustainable use of its exclusive economic zone, Tokelau has joined the Vessel Day Scheme, a mechanism allowing vessel owners to purchase and trade days fishing at sea in places subject to the Nauru Agreement concerning Cooperation in the Management of Fisheries of Common Interest. The scheme is used to sustainably manage catches of target tuna species and increase the rate of return from fishing activities through access fees paid by distant water fishing nations. At the request of Tokelau, and according to the administering Power, the Administrator is now responsible for the management of the Territory's exclusive economic zone. All the necessary formalities have been concluded in order for the Administrator to manage the zone for the foreseeable future, until Tokelau is in a position to assume that responsibility. In October 2015, the General Fono approved fisheries reforms intended to further improve the administration and management of the Territory's offshore and inshore fisheries. The implementation of the reform programme has begun under the guidance of a fisheries reform steering group comprising representatives of Tokelau, the Office of the Administrator and the New Zealand Ministry of Primary Industries (who provide technical advice to the Administrator).

14. In May 2014, the ninety-second meeting of officials of the Forum Fisheries Council of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency was, for the first time, held in Tokelau. It was followed by the tenth annual ministerial meeting of the Forum Fisheries Committee of the Agency, in July 2014, also held in Tokelau for the first time since the Territory joined the Agency in 2002. Both meetings were the first regional meetings to be held in the Territory. At the ministerial meeting, the participants endorsed a road map, the Atafu Declaration, which culminated in the

ministers signing the Tokelau Arrangement for the Management of the South Pacific Albacore Fishery in December 2014. On 30 November, Tokelau had become the first member of the Agency to sign the Arrangement, which provides a framework for the development of cooperative zone-based management of South Pacific albacore tuna fisheries.

15. Traditional and communal values and practices play a key role in contributing to a state of general well-being in the Territory, as evidenced by the *inati* system and the importance attached to upholding the concept of the family and/or the extended family. The tradition of *inati* requires the deposit at a central location of food and produce, which are then apportioned by the distributors on the basis of "share groups". The principle provides for a secure distribution system that addresses the needs of every member of the community, including older persons, widows, single parents and children.

B. Assistance to Tokelau by the administering Power

16. Assistance is provided through budget support and specific projects. In 2016/17, New Zealand provided $NZ 12 million in general budget support, allocated $NZ 2 million in bilateral funding for technical assistance and infrastructure projects and other funding of $NZ 5.5 million for fisheries management, disaster preparedness and scholarships, and provided assistance from regional agencies and New Zealand partners, including the New Zealand police.

17. The major capital project for the period 2012-2015 was a new passenger cargo ship, the *Mataliki*, for which New Zealand provided $NZ 13 million. The *Mataliki* was handed over to Tokelau in February 2016.

18. The Tokelau International Trust Fund, formally established in November 2004, was designed to provide intergenerational security and an independent source of income to Tokelau in the future. With contributions from Australia, New Zealand, Tokelau and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the level of the Fund as at 31 October 2016 was $NZ 86.9 million.

C. Transport and communications

19. Tokelau has no airstrips. Its transportation needs are met by regular passenger and cargo shipping services from Apia. According to the administering Power and in recognizing that the quality of the transport service linking the atolls and providing contact with Samoa is vital to Tokelau, the Government of New Zealand has gifted Tokelau with the *Mataliki*, a purpose-built vessel that carries up to 60 passengers and essential cargo. New Zealand has also assisted in improving the transfer of passengers and cargo from ship to shore through the provision of new barges, heavy equipment, safety equipment and training. New Zealand is providing support to Tokelau for the upgrading of reef passages and wharf infrastructure.

20. Telecommunications services in Tokelau are provided through the Tokelau Telecommunications Corporation (Teletok). Teletok is installing infrastructure to launch a mobile phone service. New Zealand has provided technical assistance to support Teletok's planning and has offered assistance to develop a detailed plan with

a sound development rationale for New Zealand investing in telecommunications in Tokelau. This intention aligns with the national strategic plan of Tokelau, which identifies that high-quality and affordable Internet services will aid in the development of education, health, governance and the economy.

D. Power supply

21. In 2012, Tokelau became the first area in the world to draw electrical power primarily from solar sources, following the completion of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project, funded by the Governments of Tokelau and New Zealand. The initiative installed solar photovoltaic systems with large solar arrays on the three atolls.

22. The demand for electricity has grown since 2012. As a result, the Government of Tokelau has funded the expansion of the photovoltaic systems and upgrades of the village distribution networks. As a Pacific island affected by climate change, Tokelau has made a commitment to renewable energy that can serve as an example for the developed world.

III. Social conditions

A. General

23. On 18 October 2016, Statistics New Zealand and the Tokelau Statistics Unit conducted the five-yearly census. The official de jure usually resident population of Tokelau is 1,499. This comprises the usually resident population present on census night (1,197) and the usually resident absentee subpopulation (302). This figure represents a 6.2 per cent increase from the previous census, in 2011. Further census findings will be published on the web page of the Government of Tokelau. The first household income and expenditure survey was also completed in 2016. This survey estimates total annual household income in 2015/16 of $NZ 7 million. Of this, employment accounts for 77.2 per cent, imputed rents for 10 per cent, income from transfers (including remittances, social benefits, pension and scholarships) for 7 per cent and gifts (in kind and remittances) for 5.1 per cent. The survey estimates an average household size of 4.6 people and annual household income of $NZ 6,100. Some 40 per cent of the population of Tokelau is less than 20 years of age, with a median age of 25 years.

B. Education

24. In Tokelau, early childhood, primary and secondary education are free up to year 13 and provided by the three schools in Tokelau, one on each atoll. As an owner of the University of the South Pacific, Tokelau has access to the University's distance-learning foundation course through the University's satellite receiver and centre located on each atoll. The cost of the University's local infrastructure and staff is covered by the Government of Tokelau. According to the administering Power, the Government of Tokelau is investing significantly in its scholarship scheme, which prioritizes study at the University.

25. According to the administering Power, notwithstanding the support for education over many years, education standards on the atolls remain relatively low, according to a report of the Education Review Office of New Zealand published in February 2014. Consequently, with significant financial commitment from New Zealand, Tokelau is carrying out a long-term plan to transform compulsory education with the assistance of the Centre for Educational Development of Massey University. Assistance is focused on the strengthening of school governance and leadership, the professional development of teachers and principals and the improvement of learning outcomes for students. There is evidence of substantial improvements in these areas, but much remains to be done.

26. New schools were completed on Atafu and Fakaofo in 2013 with funding from New Zealand. The exterior of the new school building on Nukunonu is nearing completion, but it could be early 2018 before all its rooms are fully equipped and all classes are held in the new building.

C. Health care

27. According to the administering Power, the provision of adequate health services on three dispersed atolls remains a major challenge. The Department of Health has proposed that the new hospital on Nukunonu be staffed and equipped to expand the health services offered in Tokelau. Nevertheless, the immediate priority agreed upon by the Department and the village councils has been the recruitment of doctors, so that each atoll can have a doctor, and an effective scheme for transferring patients to Apia, Samoa or New Zealand. The construction of a new health clinic on Fakaofo has been delayed by damage to the prefabricated building supplies.

28. The review of health services in Tokelau conducted in 2014 recommended a centralization of services, with a provision for health specialists who would work nationally through the new hospital on Nukunonu and under the Department of Health rather than the village councils. This would be a significant change from the current practice of providing specialist services offshore through the Tokelau Patient Referral Scheme. The Government of Tokelau has a relationship with the National Health Service of Samoa, whereby patients are referred as first port of call. The Department has thus far not persuaded all the village councils that it can recruit the clinicians needed to carry out the recommendations made in the review.

29. The review also recommended placing greater emphasis on promoting good health and improving the capacity of the Tokelau public Health Unit to reduce the threats posed by non-communicable diseases, which are the source of the main burden of diseases and mortality. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand has supported the World Health Organization (WHO) to assist Tokelau with non-communicable disease initiatives. WHO conducted an assessment of the population's health in 2012, and found that low levels of physical activity and poor dietary habits had resulted in obesity in 74.7 per cent of Tokelauans.

30. As indicated in the 2011 census, 46.6 per cent of the population are daily smokers. The New Zealand Volunteer Service Abroad assisted the Department of Health and the villages in developing a tobacco control policy aimed at gradually reducing the quantities of cigarettes shipped to Tokelau. Several rounds of

consultations with the villages resulted in the policy being approved by the General Fono in November 2016.

31. There are initiatives under way to improve education regarding diet and nutrition. A study by the Tokelau Statistics Unit on imports to Tokelau in 2014, completed in 2016, has confirmed high consumption of tobacco, alcohol and sugar. In May 2015, Tokelau was recognized by WHO as part of its "Healthy Islands" initiative for banning the importation of fizzy drinks (although these have been replaced by high-fat chocolate milk), according to the administering Power.

32. Appropriate tools and protocols are in place for early detection of non-communicable diseases and risk factors in all hospitals so that patients receive early support and management, thereby reducing the risk of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases. According to the administering Power, however, significant changes have yet to result. Continuous training, recruitment and retention of health-care professionals are necessary to address those growing problems and present significant challenges.

33. Tokelau has low infant and maternal mortality thanks to the early referral of mothers for maternity care. Antenatal care coverage and coverage for child immunization is 100 per cent.

34. The Government of Tokelau reports that the proportion of the population with access to improved sanitation facilities is 93 per cent and to improved drinking water sources is 97 per cent.

IV. External relations

35. As set out in paragraphs 9 and 10 of the Joint Statement of the Principles of Partnership between Tokelau and New Zealand, Tokelau, as a Non-Self-Governing Territory, does not have an international legal personality separate from that of New Zealand that would allow it to enter into formal international legal obligations as a State in its own right. In consultation with Tokelau, New Zealand is responsible for entering into any such obligations on behalf of Tokelau. Tokelau participates in regional and international organizations in its own right to the extent that such organizations allow.

36. Tokelau is seeking to increase its engagement with regional and international organizations. It is a member of the Pacific Community, the Pacific Community Coastal Fisheries Programme, the Council of the University of the South Pacific, the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency. At the forty-fifth Pacific Islands Forum, held in Koror, Palau, from 29 to 31 July 2014, the participants agreed to admit Tokelau as an associate member. Tokelau is a member of the Pacific Community and the Polynesian Leaders Group and an associate member of WHO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. In addition to having a relationship with New Zealand, Samoa is an important bilateral contact for Tokelau. Tokelau continues to seek the support of New Zealand in gaining access to the Green Climate Fund and other adaptation and mitigation facilities. Representatives of Tokelau attended the twenty-second session

of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as part of the New Zealand delegation.

V. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

37. Speaking at the 8th meeting of the Special Committee, on 21 June 2016, the Ulu-o-Tokelau, Afega Gaualofa, highlighted the importance of climate change to Tokelau, specifically requesting that Tokelau be invited to United Nations meetings on climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to ensure that the Tokelau perspective would be heard.

38. He noted that the total aid programme to Tokelau from New Zealand was made up of programme funding for activities focusing on strengthening its public services, improving the quality of life on the atolls and maximizing fisheries revenue.

39. He acknowledged that New Zealand had gifted Tokelau with the *Mataliki*, a vessel specifically designed for Tokelau capable of transporting up to 60 passengers on the international voyage between Samoa and Tokelau and up to 120 passengers between the atolls. The new ship was larger and more efficient than previous vessels owned by Tokelau. New Zealand was also working closely with Tokelau on a ship-to-shore project, which focused on increasing the safety and efficiency of the transfer of passengers and cargoes from the new vessel and other chartered vessels safely ashore.

40. He noted that New Zealand was working with Tokelau to improve the quality of teaching and learning outcomes, with education advisers working in schools and with school management. Tokelau was currently working with New Zealand to extend that programme to the health sector. He also noted that Tokelau and New Zealand were continuing to work together in key areas, including managing the Territory's exclusive economic zone to increase the revenue that Tokelau earned from fisheries while protecting food security, preparing a 30-year asset management plan for public infrastructure and strengthening economic governance.

41. He registered the gratitude of Tokelau to New Zealand for its support, in particular for the journey of Tokelau and its efforts to meet the aspirations of its people for a reliable, strong and brighter future. He extended his thanks to the Special Committee and the United Nations for their interest in the welfare of Tokelau.

42. He reiterated that Tokelau, by virtue of its political status, was not eligible for many of the United Nations climate change development resources. He sought support to assist Tokelau so that the Territory could have access to resources such as the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund to assist in its adaptation to and mitigation of climate change. He noted that the spirit of self-determination was alive in Tokelau and that the Government was determined to establish robust infrastructure that would provide the services that its communities needed. In the discussions on climate change, Tokelau needed to be able to stand with other similar Pacific countries regardless of constitutional status. According to

him, Tokelau wished to assume its obligation and responsibility to fight alongside other nations for the very existence of humanity. The Committee should therefore consider how it could provide practical support to enable Tokelau to participate in United Nations meetings on climate change and oceans.

B. Position of the administering Power

43. Addressing the Special Committee at its 8th meeting, on 21 June 2016, Linda Te Puni, the former Administrator of Tokelau, said that New Zealand continued to work in partnership with the leadership and people of Tokelau. The challenges that the Territory continued to face (isolation and a small population) were unlikely to change, given its position as one of the most geographically isolated communities in the world. The administering Power was committed to the constitutional relationship with the Government and people of Tokelau, and its focus remained on ensuring that all Tokelauans living on the three atolls were receiving essential services. That required continuing dialogue, a substantial level of general budget support and effective responses to the Territory's requests for assistance to improve the quality of life for people living there.

44. She reported on the ceremony held in February 2016 in Apia, at which the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Murray McCully, had handed over the specially designed ship for Tokelau, the *Mataliki*. The total cost of the *Mataliki* had been $NZ 12.95 million. Mr. McCully had described the handover as a milestone in improving the Territory's connectivity with the Pacific region and the wider world.

45. She noted that New Zealand continued to manage the Territory's exclusive economic zone fisheries resource, which was the largest income source for Tokelau. Revenue from fisheries for the year ending April 2016 had been estimated to have reached $NZ 13.4 million. At the request of Tokelau, the Administrator was continuing to manage the Territory's exclusive economic zone in conjunction with Tokelau and with the assistance of the Ministry for Primary Industries of New Zealand. The Administrator would be working closely with Tokelau on a series of fisheries reforms to improve governance and establish a new fisheries management agency for the Territory.

46. She acknowledged the importance to Tokelau of climate change and ocean vulnerability, and explained that New Zealand government agencies had been working with Tokelau on its climate change response plans. New Zealand had facilitated the participation of Tokelau in negotiations through the New Zealand delegation.

47. She recognized that Tokelau was committed to improving its information and telecommunications connectivity. In response, New Zealand had provided technical assistance to Teletok to map out its investment strategy and develop technical specifications for its mobile phone service. New Zealand was offering continuing support to assist Tokelau in reviewing investment options with a view to supporting the Territory's efforts to implement the most appropriate connectivity solution.

48. She noted the recent request from Tokelau for expert technical assistance to enable its Department of Finance to strengthen public financial management. In response, New Zealand would commit funding to a three-year programme of

assistance and capacity-building. The initial focus was on assisting Tokelau to prepare medium-term budget forecasts and its budget for 2016/17, including national infrastructure asset maintenance and renewal.

49. She also noted that the bilateral allocation by New Zealand of $NZ 14.1 million in 2016/17 had been supplemented by non-bilateral funding of $NZ 5.5 million for fisheries management, disaster preparedness, scholarships and assistance from regional agencies and New Zealand partners, including the New Zealand police.

50. She further noted that New Zealand continued to support the Territory's current focus on providing core services and improving the quality of life of its people while it remained paused in its self-determination efforts, as had been the case since the referendums to change its status in 2006 and 2007 did not achieve the required majority set by the leaders of Tokelau. New Zealand respected the pace that Tokelau alone wished to set as it developed towards the future of its choosing.

51. She noted that New Zealand continued to value its close association with Tokelau and was resolute in supporting such remote communities of New Zealand citizens.

VI. Consideration by the United Nations

A. Consideration of the question of Tokelau by the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

52. The Special Committee considered the question of Tokelau at its 8th meeting, on 21 June 2016. The representative of Papua New Guinea, also on behalf of Fiji, introduced draft resolution A/AC.109/2016/L.25, which the Special Committee adopted without a vote. The representative of Fiji made a statement (see A/AC.109/2016/SR.8).

B. Consideration of the question of Tokelau by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

53. At its 7th meeting, on 10 October 2016, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee adopted without a vote draft resolution VI (see A/71/23, chap. XIII) on the question of Tokelau.

C. Action taken by the General Assembly

54. At its 71st plenary meeting, on 6 December 2016, the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution 71/107 on the question of Tokelau. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Acknowledged the decision of the General Fono in 2008 that consideration of any future act of self-determination by Tokelau would be deferred

and that New Zealand and Tokelau would devote renewed effort and attention to ensuring that essential services and infrastructure on the atolls of Tokelau were enhanced and strengthened, thereby ensuring an enhanced quality of life and opportunities for the people of Tokelau;

(b) Welcomed the progress made towards the devolution of power to the three taupulega (village councils) since 2004, and noted that further discussion was planned on the recommendations in the report on the devolution review, compiled in 2012;

(c) Noted with appreciation that Tokelau and New Zealand remained firmly committed to the ongoing development of Tokelau for the long-term benefit of the people of Tokelau, with particular emphasis on the further development of facilities on each atoll that would meet their current requirements;

(d) Recalled the adoption by Tokelau of its National Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 and that the Joint Commitment for Development between Tokelau and New Zealand 2011-2015 prioritized four main development pillars, including good governance, infrastructure development, human resources capacity development and sustainable development;

(e) Acknowledged the ongoing and consistent commitment of New Zealand to meeting the social and economic requirements of the people of Tokelau, including with the completion of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project and a new shipping charter service, as well as the support and cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme and WHO;

(f) Commended the achievement by Tokelau in 2013 of 60 per cent of the objectives of its National Strategic Plan, including the completion of the Tokelau Renewable Energy Project with the support of the administering Power and receipt by the Government of the Renewable Energy Award granted by the New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority;

(g) Acknowledged the need of Tokelau for continued support from the international community and its desire to become part of the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, the impacts of climate change and the protection of the environment and oceans;

(h) Noted the intention of Tokelau to further review its National Strategic Plan in order to determine development and other priorities beyond 2015 and to include consideration of the issue of self-determination and how the Territory would address a possible referendum on self-determination in cooperation with the administering Power;

(i) Recalled with satisfaction the establishment and operation of the Tokelau International Trust Fund to support the ongoing needs of Tokelau, and called upon Member States and international and regional agencies to contribute to the Fund and thereby lend practical support to Tokelau in overcoming the problems of smallness, isolation and lack of resources;

(j) Welcomed the cooperative attitude of the other States and territories in the region towards Tokelau and their support for its economic and political aspirations and its increasing participation in regional and international affairs, and in that regard noted the successful chairmanship by Tokelau in 2014 of the tenth

annual ministerial meeting of the Forum Fisheries Committee of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, held in Tokelau on 1 and 2 July 2014, and the representation of the Agency by the Ulu-o-Tokelau at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Apia from 1 to 4 September 2014, and the signing by Tokelau of the Pacific Islands Development Forum Charter on 27 April 2016 so as to become the twelfth member of the Forum;

(k) Called upon the administering Power and United Nations agencies to continue to provide assistance to Tokelau as it further developed;

(l) Recognized the positive actions taken by the administering Power to transmit to the Secretary-General under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations information regarding the political, economic and social situation of Tokelau;

(m) Commended the commitment of both Tokelau and New Zealand to continuing to work together in the interests of Tokelau and its people;

(n) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of Tokelau and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session.

55. At its 53rd plenary meeting, on 6 December 2016, the General Assembly also adopted resolution 71/122 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, paragraph 7 of which refers to Tokelau.

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Turks and Caicos Islands

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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Note: The information contained in the present working paper has been derived from public sources, including those of the territorial Government, and from information transmitted to the Secretary-General by the administering Power under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations. Information was transmitted by the administering Power on 8 December 2016. Further details are contained in previous working papers, available from www.un.org/en/decolonization/workingpapers.shtml.

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The Territory at a glance

Territory: The Turks and Caicos Islands is a Non-Self-Governing Territory under the Charter of the United Nations administered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Representative of administering Power: Governor John Freeman (October 2016)

Geography: The Territory, which comprises 40 islands and cays, lies 145 km north of Haiti and the Dominican Republic and 925 km south-east of Miami, United States of America. Six islands are permanently inhabited: Grand Turk, where the capital is located; Providenciales, the business and tourist centre with the great majority of the population; North Caicos; Middle Caicos; South Caicos; and Salt Cay.

Land area: 948.2 km²

Exclusive economic zone: 154,068 km²

Population: 37,910 (2016 estimate): 38.1 per cent are citizens, or "belongers"; 61.9 per cent are immigrants, or "non-belongers", from the Bahamas, Canada, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, the United Kingdom, the United States and other countries (2012 census)

Life expectancy at birth: 79.8 years (men: 77.1 years; women: 82.7 years (2016 estimate))

Language: English

Capital: Cockburn Town

Head of territorial Government: Sharlene Cartwright-Robinson (December 2016)

Main political parties: People's Democratic Movement; Progressive National Party

Elections: Most recent: 15 December 2016; next: due by December 2020

Legislature: House of Assembly

Gross domestic product per capita: $16,813 (2015 estimate)

Economy: Tourism, financial services, construction

Unemployment rate: 11 per cent (2015 estimate)

Monetary unit: United States dollar

Brief history: The first inhabitants of the islands were the Arawakan-speaking Taino people. In 1799, the islands were annexed by Great Britain as part of the Bahamas and subsequently Jamaica. They became a separate colony of the United Kingdom in 1962, when Jamaica achieved independence, but they maintained close constitutional ties with the Bahamas. After the Bahamas became independent, in 1973, a governor replaced the former administrator of the Turks and Caicos Islands.

I. Constitutional, legal and political issues

1. The Turks and Caicos Islands Constitution Order 2011, which entered into force on 15 October 2012, provides for a governor as the head of the Government, a house of assembly composed of elected and appointed members and the Attorney General, with a cabinet and ministers appointed from among those elected or appointed members.

2. The 2011 Constitution also provides for the judiciary, the public service and a number of institutions protecting good governance, notably an integrity commission, a human rights commission, an auditor general and a director of public prosecution. Provisions are also made in relation to Crown land and public financial management. Under the Order, the British Crown reserves the power, with the advice and consent of the Privy Council of the United Kingdom, to make laws for the peace, order and good governance of the Territory.

3. The Governor, appointed by the British Crown, is responsible for external affairs, defence, internal security, including the police force, and some public service matters.

4. The legislature, the House of Assembly, comprises the Speaker, 15 elected members, 4 appointed members and the Attorney General. Ten members are elected to represent one electoral district each and the remaining five are elected by Territory-wide vote.

5. The law of the Territory consists mainly of locally enacted statutes, along with some laws enacted in the United Kingdom and applied to the Territory, and English common law. The court system includes magistrates' courts, the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal, with ultimate recourse to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. On the advice of a judicial service commission, the Governor appoints magistrates and the judges of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal.

6. According to the administering Power, the recent past has seen political turbulence in the Turks and Caicos Islands. The Territory operated on the basis of a ministerial system of government under the 2006 Constitution, negotiated between the elected territorial Government and the United Kingdom, until 14 August 2009, whereupon the United Kingdom brought into force legislation that, among other things, temporarily suspended parts of the Constitution, thereby removing the Government and the House of Assembly. The United Kingdom stated that the action had been motivated by mounting evidence of systemic corruption in the territorial Government and legislature and among public officers, which was uncovered by a commission of inquiry established in July 2008 (see also section IV.E, below).

7. Between August 2009 and November 2012, the Governor, who had been given extended powers, worked under interim constitutional arrangements with an advisory council and a consultative forum. Each was constituted by islanders appointed by the Governor. The arrangement was referred to as the "interim Government", the "interim Administration" or "direct rule".

8. Coinciding with the 2009 suspension of parts of the 2006 Constitution, an economic downturn and austerity measures required to "balance the books" and to ensure that public services in the Territory could continue to function led to layoffs

in the public sector. According to the administering Power, doing so generated a degree of resentment among some residents, who perceived the layoffs as being a direct result of the intervention by the United Kingdom.

9. In 2011, the United Kingdom passed a new constitution for the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Territory's fifth since 1962. It added a variety of good governance initiatives and measures to ensure the sound management of the public finances.

10. The interim Administration came to an end on 9 November 2012 when elections were held. With an 84 per cent voter turnout, the Progressive National Party, which had been in office when the previous Government was removed in 2009, won eight seats, while the People's Democratic Movement won seven seats. The leader of the Progressive National Party, Rufus Ewing, was sworn in as Premier on 13 November 2012, returning elected government rule to the Territory.

11. In February 2013, the Caribbean Community noted with grave concern that, although the elections of November 2012 had led to the restoration of representative government in the Territory, the overall state of political affairs remained less than desirable and the restoration of true democracy was still a far way off. It dispatched a ministerial fact-finding mission to the Territory in June 2013. According to media reports, the mission's internal report contained a number of recommendations, including the holding of a referendum on the acceptance of British rule under the current Constitution. In March 2014, the Heads of Government of the Community received an update on the situation, undertaking to continue to monitor it and expressing their support for the full restoration of democracy in the Territory on terms driven by its people. Furthermore, they said that they continued to look forward to a response from the Government of the United Kingdom to the mission's report.

12. For its part, in September 2013, the House of Assembly established an eight-member constitutional review committee, which comprised representatives of the territorial Government, the opposition and the public, that was mandated to review the 2011 Constitution, hold consultations with the public and make recommendations by 15 November 2014 to the House for constitutional changes to be debated and ratified for onward submission to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom.

13. In its report submitted to the Premier in November 2014, the Committee made a series of recommendations relating to most parts of the 2011 Constitution, which included the reinstatement of the automatic right to trial by jury enshrined in the 2006 Constitution, the inclusion of a requirement that the Premier be a Turks and Caicos islander, the repeal of the provision disqualifying someone from running for Premier after serving two consecutive terms in that post and the removal of the reference to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer. With regard to a referendum on independence, the Committee stated that it was a matter for the political hierarchy and not within its terms of reference.

14. The final report was debated and passed by the House of Assembly in January 2015, and the recommendations of the Committee were forwarded to the Government of the United Kingdom for its consideration. According to the administering Power, after careful consideration, the Government of the United

Kingdom did not accept those recommendations on the grounds that the current Constitution was key to ensuring that the Turks and Caicos Islands continued to meet internationally recognized standards of good governance, the rule of law and sound financial management.

15. In April 2016, then Governor Peter Beckingham reportedly stated that if the people of an overseas territory wished to consider the possibility of independence, the United Kingdom would not stand in the way of a referendum. He also stated that it would be for the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands to make up their own minds about whether the benefits of the relationship with the United Kingdom, including education, access to Europe, support for government institutions and security, outweighed the advantages of becoming an independent country.

16. At the general election held on 15 December 2016, with 80.4 per cent voter turnout (6,217 votes cast out of 7,732 registered voters), the People's Democratic Movement won 10 of the 15 elected seats in the House of Assembly, returning to the majority after a 13-year hiatus. Its leader, Sharlene Cartwright-Robinson, became the first female Premier of the Territory on 19 December 2016.

II. Budget

17. According to the administering Power, the territorial Government achieved an unaudited operating surplus of $68.5 million in the financial year 2015/16, a figure that takes into account the final repayment, in February 2016, of a loan guaranteed by the Government of the United Kingdom. The surplus, which was $39 million above the approved budget projection, was mainly driven by recurrent activities. In addition, the actual performance for the budget cycle of 2015/16 included recurrent revenues of $228.3 million, recurrent expenditures of $191.6 million and capital expenditures of $22.3 million. The improvement in revenue performance in 2015/16 was tied, in particular, to continued growth in the tourism sector.

18. With respect to the 2016/17 budget, the approved revenue target is $250.85 million (a 9.5 per cent increase over that of the 2015/16 budget), the recurrent expenditure target is $207.2 million and the capital expenditure target is $36.4 million. It is projected that there will be a surplus of $7.4 million.

19. The territorial Government levies no corporate or personal income tax, capital gains tax or inheritance tax. Foreign corporations pay licence fees to operate in the Territory.

20. According to the administering Power, as of December 2016, although $14.9 million had been allocated to the Territory from the eleventh European Development Fund, the financing agreement had yet to be finalized.

III. Economic conditions

A. General

21. The main sectors of the economy are tourism and financial services. The Territory's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015 in terms of current prices was

estimated at $894 million, up from $824 million in 2014. The official statistics indicate that the estimated real growth of the economy in 2015 in constant terms was 5.9 per cent, which was attributed mainly to growth in tourism. The territorial Government projects that real GDP in 2016 will reach approximately $644 million, representing a forecast annual growth of 4.4 per cent, compared with approximately $617 million in 2015.

B. Tourism and construction

22. Tourism continues to be the Territory's primary industry, accounting for approximately 40 per cent of its GDP in 2015. Tourism also contributes over 25 per cent of the Government's annual recurrent revenue. Both foreign investors and visitors, mainly from Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States, play significant roles. According to official statistics, visitor arrivals in 2015 totalled approximately 1.32 million, with cruise passengers accounting for more than two thirds (nearly 930,000 passengers). There were 386,052 stayover visitors in 2015, an increase of 8.1 per cent, compared with 357,237 in 2014. According to the administering Power, growth in the number of stopover arrivals continued in the first quarter of 2016, boosting year-on-year growth for the first quarter by 19 per cent. Cruise passenger arrivals, on the other hand, declined by 4 per cent when compared with the same period in 2015. The vast majority of stopover tourists continue to be accommodated at resorts on Providenciales. The GDP of the hotel and restaurant sector grew by 7.3 per cent in 2015.

23. According to the information provided by the administering Power, while construction activity declined by approximately 3.5 per cent in 2015, it is projected to grow in 2016. More than 10 per cent of the 2016/2017 budget allocation is expected to be used to support the construction and associated sectors.

C. Financial services

24. International financial services, including company registration, trust business and insurance, are a source of external revenue for the Turks and Caicos Islands. According to the administering Power, a significant part of the Territory's financial services sector is the licensing of small captive reinsurance companies that operate primarily in the United States. There are seven commercial banks in the Territory, three of which are Canadian. The licensing, supervision and development of the international financial services sector are entrusted to the Turks and Caicos Islands Financial Services Commission, which also provides a centralized service for registering companies, partnerships, trademarks and patents in the Territory. According to the administering Power, from April 2015 to March 2016, the industry as a whole remained strong, with the number of banks remaining steady compared with the previous year. Total assets in the banking sector contracted by 8.9 per cent during that review period, with the bulk of the contraction being reflected in the portfolio of one bank. Non-performing loans also contracted by 26.5 per cent. There was continued growth in the international insurance sector (12.5 per cent), which was supported by the expansion of international company incorporation.

25. According to the administering Power, the territorial Government continued to seek treaty partners for tax information exchange agreements. In December 2013, the Territory signed the Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement on Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information based on article 6 of the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters. The Territory has also signed agreements under the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act with the United Kingdom and the United States.

26. In April 2016, the Turks and Caicos Islands concluded a bilateral arrangement with the United Kingdom on the reciprocal exchange of beneficial ownership information. According to the administering Power, under the arrangement, which is expected to come into effect by June 2017, law enforcement authorities will have timely access to beneficial ownership information on corporate and legal entities incorporated in the respective jurisdictions.

27. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, held in London on 1 and 2 November 2016, the overseas territories and the United Kingdom reiterated their mutual determination to continue to tackle corruption, fraud, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and to further enhance transparency and law enforcement cooperation in the context of financial services. They also reiterated their shared commitment to providing the leadership necessary to meet the June 2017 deadline for the implementation of new arrangements regarding the exchange of beneficial ownership information on companies incorporated in their jurisdictions and to continuing to provide the highest levels of law enforcement cooperation possible before that date.

D. Agriculture and fisheries

28. Agriculture and fisheries typically account for less than 1 per cent of the Territory's GDP. Agricultural production is limited by the lack of fresh water and consists mainly of the growing of vegetables and citrus fruits on the Caicos Islands. According to the administering Power, there are no medium or large commercial producers of either crops or livestock.

29. Fishing is the Territory's main primary sector industry. A recent pelagic fishing study found that the Territory was producing as much as 5,000 pounds of tuna, swordfish, mahi-mahi and other deep-water fish per year for the local and export markets.

E. Communications and utilities

30. The Territory's transport and communications facilities are of fairly good quality. The road network covers about 120 km, with 24 km of paved roads on Grand Turk, Providenciales and the Caicos Islands.

31. The Territory has three international airports: the main one on Providenciales and smaller ones on Grand Turk and South Caicos. Flights are available to Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Canada, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, the United Kingdom and the United States (including Puerto Rico).

32. The main commercial port of South Dock is situated on Providenciales. Grand Turk has a commercial port and a cruise ship terminal. North Caicos has a deep-water port.

33. Three telecommunications companies provide national and international telephone services in the Territory. There are two television stations in the Territory. The two main weekly newspapers also maintain websites.

34. The Territory has a monopoly supplier of electricity that produces electricity exclusively from diesel-powered generators. Numerous studies have indicated that, owing to the excessive cost of electricity generation, solar and wind technologies would not only be economically viable but also offer a less-expensive alternative for private individuals.

IV. Social conditions

A. General

35. In its 2012 preliminary census report, the Territory noted that, of the total population of 31,458, 16,037 (51 per cent) were men and 15,421 (49 per cent) were women. Around 74 per cent of the total population was over 18 years of age. According to official information, people from approximately 70 countries live in the Turks and Caicos Islands. The territorial Government estimated that the total population in 2016 was 37,910 (20,296 men and 19,496 women).

36. The Turks and Caicos Islands National Insurance Board, a statutory body of the territorial Government, is the sole provider of social insurance benefits to persons between 16 and 65 years of age who are gainfully employed within the Territory.

37. According to the 2012 *Turks and Caicos Islands Country Poverty Assessment Report*, 22 per cent of the population and 16 per cent of households were living in poverty, compared with 26 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively, in 1999. On the other hand, the number of people living in poverty in 2012 was much higher (approximately 6,800) than it was in 1999 (around 3,900), owing to the high level of population growth since 1999. The Department of Social Development continues to assist the poor and vulnerable through various programmes, including free medical care, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Human Services.

B. Labour and immigration

38. The public sector continues to be the Territory's main employer. Other major employment sectors include tourism, construction and international financial and business services. According to official sources, the unemployment rate in 2015 was 11 per cent, down from 12 per cent in 2014.

39. Data from the 2012 preliminary census report indicate that immigrants accounted for 57.5 per cent of the population aged 18 and older. The rate of growth of the immigrant population was much higher than that of citizens.

40. According to the administering Power, since 2012, the Territory has put in place a transparent and simplified system to obtain British overseas territory citizenship. In 2015, a new Turks and Caicos Islander Status Ordinance was passed, which articulated the circumstances for acquiring islander status by right or by grant, in keeping with the Turks and Caicos Islands Constitution Order 2011. In addition, a new immigration ordinance, passed by Parliament in September 2015, was the first ever to include provisions on asylum. In the view of the administering Power, this attests to the Territory's commitment to its obligations under the United Nations 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

41. According to the administering Power, while border security remains a concern, the commissioning of a coastal radar station, coupled with diplomatic engagement with countries of origin and working relationships with the marine branch of the police and other response agencies, has proved to be an important tool in the interception and screening of persons seeking to cross borders via sea.

C. Education

42. Education in the Territory is free and compulsory for children from 4 to 16 years of age. There are 47 schools, with a total enrolment of approximately 5,200 pupils, covering preschool to tertiary education. Of those, 10 primary schools and 4 secondary schools are run by the territorial Government. While there are more private schools than public schools, approximately 80 per cent of pupils are enrolled in public schools. There are also two schools for children with special needs. The adult literacy rate among islanders is estimated at 98 per cent, while that of immigrants is much lower.

43. With regard to higher education, the Turks and Caicos Islands Community College, a community college with branches on Grand Turk and Providenciales, provides two-year and four-year courses of study. According to the administering Power, the College, in its five-year strategic plan, identified as priority areas the strengthening of its leadership and administration and the expansion of programme offerings to reflect the Territory's development needs.

44. Students from overseas territories benefit from the home student rate for school fees at British universities, provided that they have lived in a British overseas territory, the European Economic Area or Switzerland for the three years prior to the first academic year of their course of study. In addition, those students have access to funding provided by the European Union for higher or vocational education.

D. Public health

45. According to the administering Power, medical facilities in the Turks and Caicos Islands have improved in recent years with the opening of new hospital facilities operated by Interhealth Canada on Providenciales and Grand Turk. They conduct a range of activities, including diagnostic services, family practice and outpatient specialty clinics, emergency services and inpatient care. Serious cases are referred overseas, including regionally to the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic or

Jamaica. If a service is not available regionally, serious cases are referred to facilities outside the Caribbean. Primary health-care facilities are operated by the Primary Health Care Department on all islands.

E. Crime and public safety

46. The crime rate in the Turks and Caicos Islands remains low. While most offences consist mainly of theft and burglary, there is also some violent crime, such as armed robbery and murder.

47. During 2016, the United Kingdom continued to provide funding for a law enforcement adviser based in Miami, United States, who coordinated, managed and facilitated training and the provision of strategic advice in order to introduce new techniques and skills to the Territory's law enforcement agencies. In addition, the HMS *Mersey* and RFA *Wave Knight* were in the Caribbean from January to July and from July to December 2016, respectively, as part of the North Atlantic patrol tasking of the Royal Navy, ensuring a year-round maritime presence of the United Kingdom and providing humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and crisis communications support in the region. Both ships also worked with other regional navies and coast guards to combat illegal activities on the high seas. During the hurricane season, a larger Royal Navy or Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship is on standby to provide humanitarian and disaster relief support to Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

48. As previously reported, a large criminal investigation by the Special Investigation and Prosecution Team, appointed during the interim Administration when the Governor ruled directly after parts of the Constitution had been suspended, resulted in 14 people (including a former Premier and cabinet ministers) being charged with serious criminal offences. According to the administering Power, the trial process began formally in December 2015, with nine defendants facing a large number of charges, including the former Premier, Michael Misick. He faces charges of conspiracy to receive bribes, conspiracy to defraud the Government and money-laundering relating to his time in office. He was arrested in Brazil in 2012 and extradited to the Turks and Caicos Islands in 2014. He was released on conditional bail by the Supreme Court in January 2014. According to the administering Power, it estimated that the trial, which began in January 2016, would last between 12 and 18 months. As of January 2017, it was ongoing.

F. Human rights

49. In addition to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, major international human rights instruments have been extended to the Turks and Caicos Islands. The right of individual petition to the European Court of Human Rights also has been extended to the Territory.

50. To strengthen the human rights framework in the Territory, the 2011 Constitution included a preamble in which the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands affirmed their intention to commit to the democratic values of a just and humane society, pursuing dignity, prosperity, equality, love, justice, peace and

freedom for all. In addition, according to the administering Power, the section therein covering fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual provided a more comprehensive and inclusive legal framework that was more aligned to the protections guaranteed by the Convention than that of the previous 2006 Constitution, as evidenced, for example, by the addition of sexual orientation as a protected right.

51. The Human Rights Commission was established in 2008 as one of the institutions tasked with the protection of good governance under the framework set out in the 2011 Constitution. Its primary responsibility is to promote understanding and the observance of human rights. Its operation and functions are governed by subordinate legislation under the Turks and Caicos Islands Human Rights Commission Ordinance 2013.

52. The Equalities Ordinance 2012 offers protection from discrimination additional to that contained in the 2011 Constitution, identifying the protected characteristics of age, disability, marriage, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

53. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the United Kingdom and the overseas territories, including the Turks and Caicos Islands, agreed to work together to conduct a review of reservations to core United Nations human rights treaties ahead of the preparation of the report of the United Kingdom under the universal periodic review conducted by the Human Rights Council, to be submitted in 2017. They also committed themselves to working together to further develop the capacity of territories' national human rights institutions, where established, in line with the international standards set out in the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles), and to deepening understanding of their shared obligations with regard to international human rights.

V. Environment

54. The Territory's Department of Environment and Coastal Resources is responsible for the conservation, protection and management of the Territory's natural resources, including wetlands, which cover nearly half of the surface of the islands. Most of the Territory's tourism-based economy hinges on maintaining a natural environment of high quality. While Providenciales and, to a lesser extent, Grand Turk are undergoing rapid development, many of the other islands, such as North Caicos, Middle Caicos and South Caicos, are experiencing less development. East Caicos remains largely untouched and ecologically intact.

55. The Department requires an environmental impact assessment to be conducted for all development projects to ensure that such development will not cause undue damage to the environment and that the best options are taken into account and/or inevitable impacts are mitigated. According to the administering Power, careful attention is given to the delicate balance between development and environmental preservation.

56. The Territory regularly participates in regional meetings sponsored by the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism, at which planning for sustainable

fisheries and disaster risk management are discussed along with climate change issues. The administering Power also continues to provide funds for projects focused on environmental sustainability.

57. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, in 2016, the Government of the United Kingdom and the overseas territories recognized the impact that climate change had on the economies, infrastructure and ecosystems of the territories and the important interest of the overseas territories in international efforts to combat and mitigate the effects of climate change. The Government of the United Kingdom committed itself to consulting with territorial Governments on the issue of the application of the Paris Agreement to the territories. It reiterated its full commitment to consulting the overseas territories ahead of its participation in international forums on climate change to ensure that their priorities were taken into account and to including them in delegations, where appropriate, while welcoming the territories' links with regional and international organizations.

VI. Relations with international organizations and partners

58. The Turks and Caicos Islands is an associate member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, including the Commission's Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee.

59. The Territory is an associate member of the Caribbean Community. It is also a member of the Caribbean Development Bank, the International Criminal Police Organization and the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force. In addition, it is a member of the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism and an associate member of the Association of Caribbean States.

60. As a Non-Self-Governing Territory of the United Kingdom, the Territory is associated with the European Union but not a part of it. At the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, in 2016, the United Kingdom committed itself to involving Gibraltar and the overseas territories as it prepared for negotiations to leave the European Union, in accordance with their various constitutional relationships with the United Kingdom, to ensure that their priorities were taken into account.

VII. Future status of the Territory

A. Position of the territorial Government

61. Information on constitutional, legal and political developments is contained in section I, above.

B. Position of the administering Power

62. At the 7th meeting of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), on 10 October 2016, during the seventy-first session of the

General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the relationship of the Government of the United Kingdom with its overseas territories was a modern one based on partnership, shared values and the right of the people of each Territory to choose to remain British.

63. He went on to say that, since the publication in June 2012 by the Government of the United Kingdom of a white paper entitled *The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability*, his Government had worked closely with the overseas territories to further develop those partnerships. At annual meetings of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the United Kingdom and the territories reviewed strategy and commitments and, in 2015, the United Kingdom had affirmed its commitment to the advancement of the peoples of the territories, their just treatment and protecting them from abuses and the importance of promoting their right to self-determination. His Government's fundamental responsibility was to ensure the security and good governance of the territories and their peoples.

64. In the communiqué adopted at the fifth meeting of the Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council, the Government of the United Kingdom and the leaders of the overseas territories stated that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, applied to the peoples of the overseas territories. They reaffirmed the importance of promoting the right of the peoples of the territories to self-determination, a collective responsibility of all parts of the Government of the United Kingdom. They committed themselves to exploring ways in which the overseas territories could maintain international support in countering hostile sovereignty claims. It was also stated that, should a Territory with a permanent population wish it, the United Kingdom would continue to support its request to be removed from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. They agreed that the fundamental structure of their constitutional relationships was the right one — powers were devolved to the elected Governments of the territories to the maximum extent possible, consistent with the United Kingdom retaining those powers necessary to discharge its sovereign responsibilities. They also agreed upon the need to continue their engagement on those issues to ensure that constitutional arrangements worked effectively to promote the best interests of the territories and of the United Kingdom.

VIII. Action taken by the General Assembly

65. On 6 December 2016, the General Assembly adopted resolution 71/117 without a vote, on the basis of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2016 (A/71/23) and the subsequent recommendation by the Fourth Committee. In that resolution, the Assembly:

(a) Reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands to self-determination, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

(b) Also reaffirmed that, in the process of decolonization of the Turks and Caicos Islands, there was no alternative to the principle of self-determination, which was also a fundamental human right, as recognized under the relevant human rights conventions;

(c) Further reaffirmed that it was ultimately for the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands to determine freely their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and in that connection called upon the administering Power, in cooperation with the territorial Government and appropriate bodies of the United Nations system, to develop political education programmes for the Territory in order to foster an awareness among the people of their right to self-determination in conformity with the legitimate political status options, based on the principles clearly defined in Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) and other relevant resolutions and decisions;

(d) Reiterated its support for the full restoration of democracy in the Territory and for the work of the Constitutional Review Committee in that regard, and noted the efforts of the administering Power to restore good governance, including through the introduction in 2011 of a new constitution and the holding of elections in November 2012, and sound financial management in the Territory;

(e) Took note of the positions and repeated calls of the Caribbean Community and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in support of a democratically elected territorial Government and of the full restoration of democracy in the Territory as decided by its people;

(f) Noted the continuing debate on constitutional reform within the Territory, and stressed the importance of participation by all groups and interested parties in the consultation process;

(g) Stressed the importance of having in place in the Territory a constitution that reflected the aspirations and wishes of its people, based on the mechanisms for popular consultation;

(h) Requested the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter, and in that regard called upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

(i) Welcomed the active participation of the Territory in the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;

(j) Also welcomed the continuing efforts made by the territorial Government addressing the need for attention to be paid to the enhancement of socioeconomic development across the Territory;

(k) Stressed the importance of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples being apprised of the views and wishes of the people of the Turks and Caicos Islands and enhancing its understanding of their conditions, including the nature and scope of the existing political and constitutional arrangements between the Turks and Caicos Islands and the administering Power;

(l) Called upon the administering Power to participate in and cooperate fully with the work of the Special Committee in order to implement the provisions of Article 73 *e* of the Charter and the Declaration and in order to advise the Committee on the implementation of the provisions under Article 73 *b* of the Charter on efforts to promote self-government in the Turks and Caicos Islands, and encouraged the administering Power to facilitate visiting and special missions to the Territory;

(m) Reaffirmed the responsibility of the administering Power under the Charter to promote the economic and social development and preserve the cultural identity of the Territory, and requested the administering Power to take steps to enlist and make effective use of all possible assistance, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, in the strengthening of the economy of the Territory;

(n) Took into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, stressed the importance of fostering the economic and social sustainable development of the Territory by promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion and promoting the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems that supported, inter alia, economic, social and human development, while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration, restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges, and strongly urged the administering Power to refrain from undertaking any kind of illicit, harmful and unproductive activities, including the use of the Territory as a tax haven, that were not aligned with the interest of the people of the Territory;

(o) Requested the Territory and the administering Power to take all measures necessary to protect and conserve the environment of the Territory against any degradation, and once again requested the specialized agencies concerned to monitor environmental conditions in the Territory and to provide assistance to the Territory, consistent with their prevailing rules of procedure;

(p) Requested the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of the Turks and Caicos Islands and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session and on the implementation of Assembly resolution 71/117.